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Survival of Byzantine Athens and its transformation under the Latin emperors, 1204-1261

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SURVIVAL OF BYZANTINE ATHENS

AND ITS TRANSFORMATION UNDER

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Abstract

Twentieth century Byzantine Studies presented us with conclusive evidence that the Roman Empire did not fall, but rather that the western part of the Empire collapsed, and that the concept of the Roman Universal World continued to develop in the East Roman Empire. The research presented here traces the survival of the Empire through the development of medieval Athens. Unfortunately, the Byzantine scholars showed more interest in Constantinople than Athens, so historical sources dealing with the development of medieval Athens are scarce. However, this study illustrates that Athens did not simply survive, but that it maintained the unique position of having a close relationship to the imperial capital, first Rome, then Constantinople, the new Rome. Throughout the history of Athens, the city's fate was directly affected by events taking place in Constantinople, and by policies formulated by the Roman Emperors. Proof of this is evident in the extant records of these relationships, the rest lends itself to imaginative reconstruction. Regardless of local conditions, a definite link exists between the survival of Athens and the support of the emperors for the city. For centuries, Athens depended for its survival on the emperor's reverence for the classical traditions of Athens, his toleration of Christianity, his military system of themes, and his support for tax reforms, trade agreements and the growth of the Orthodox Church. The conquest of Constantinople in 1204, during the Fourth Crusade, severed ties between Athens and Constantinople. Thus, the link between Athenians and the Byzantine Emperors was lost forever. Byzantine Athens took on an important role in shaping its own destiny as it struggled for survival while at the same time, adapting to the system of western feudalism under the Latin rulers.

Chapter 1
A Brief Background of Athens

The fatal day of April 13, 1204 witnessed the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders and the Venetians. As a result, the Byzantine Empire, of which Athens was a part, came under the control of the Roman West. The city of Athens had faced Roman domination previously when the Roman Empire conquered the Greek city states in the second century B.C. At that time, Athens, in its classical splendor, was the leading city of Greek culture and learning. The prestigious reputation of classical Athens was sustained throughout that era of the Roman domination, and the life of the city continued in an uninterrupted atmosphere of peace and tranquility.[1] In distinction from other Greek cities, Athens (along with Sparta) was given the privilege of independent status. The Roman population, attracted to the traditions of Hellenism, continued to travel to Athens to study and to visit its artistic treasures, and as a result it was not long before the Greek language and culture were assimilated into the Roman civilization. In this atmosphere of peace and freedom, Athens' economy managed to sustain its people of the *polis* (city) for centuries, though the surrounding countryside was barely productive.

The peaceful but low profile of Athens was disrupted by the invasions of the Goths in the third century. In his early writings, the Athenian historian, Herennius Dexippus (210-270 A.D.), tells us that he gathered a group of citizens together, escaped from the city, regrouped and returned to Athens to repel the

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[1]W.A. Heurtley, *A Short History of Greece* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), p.30. Heurtley stated that the *Pax Romana* was welcomed by the Greeks as a change from the turmoil of the Hellenistic years.

barbarians.[2] A possible confirmation of this tale comes from the archaeologists in their discovery of an ancient building called the North Stoa, of one called the South Building and of the large quantity of third century pottery, all destroyed in a manner that indicates an attack by the Heruli in A.D.267.[3] Athens survived this raid, and the courageous Athenians repaired the damages to their city inflicted by the Goths while the Roman forces provided them with protection from further incursions.

The third century produced another disruption, the division of the Roman Empire, which separated the East from the West. Athens was now identified with the East, which further enforced the development of the Greek culture and language. Also from the East came the new force of Christianity, which was gaining momentum. The preaching of Paul from Tarsus had reached Athens as early as the first century. From the *Bible*, we learn of Paul's visit to Athens enroute to Corinth, and of his preaching at the synagogue, at the Agora and at the Areopagus. To the Athenians, Paul said, 'I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious'[4] and still, Paul marveled at the devotion the Athenians paid to the unknown god. Paul reached only a small group that included Dionysius, the Areopagite, and Damaris, a woman, but these believers founded the Christian church in Athens. Christianity was later to contribute significantly to the survival of Athens.

By the fourth century, Christianity took hold in the city of Rome, and

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[2]Howard C. Butler, *The Story of Athens* (New York: Century, 1902), p.457. Fragments of the writings of H. Dexippus can be found in F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker,ii A, pp.452 et seq.(1926).*

[3]K.M. Setton, "The Archaeology of Medieval Athens," in *Essays in Medieval Life and Though*, edited by Mundy, Emery and Nelson, (New York: Columbia University, 1955), pp.249-50.

[4]Acts of the Apostles 17:15-34. See H Καινη Διαθηκη, (Athens: Bibliki Etairia, 1967), "Πραξεισ Αποστολων," 17:15-34, pp.270-1. In Greek, δεισιδαιμονεστεροψσ(somewhat superstitious) is used.

penetrated the household of the Emperor. With the support of Constantine, pagan Rome was transformed into a Christian city, but the Emperor spared Athens and paganism was preserved in the Greek city. In fact, Constantine neither forced Christianity upon the Athenians nor severed his connection as *Strategus* (general) of Athens, in which role he continued to provide an annual gift of grain to them.[5] His son, Constantius, when he became the next emperor, went a step further and handed over to Athens several islands, which would provide the city an abundance of corn.[6]

In this same century, the Emperor Constantine rebuilt the ancient Greek city of Byzantium, and transferred his capital to this newly Christian city, which carried his name. The new capital, Constantinople, with its strategic position, was not susceptible to the invasions of barbarians as were the cities of the West. Thus, the East Roman Empire, which had separated from the West, developed independently of the Latin world, and survived intact into the middle of the fifteenth century. As for Athens, it managed to outlast Constantinople and even the Empire itself. Even so, during this period, Athens lost to Constantinople its leadership in promoting the Greek culture and language, and the support of the Roman Emperors, who now favored the promotion of Christianity over pagan philosophy. Only Emperor Julian(361-3) favored the pagan philosophy over Christianity. Julian, who studied in Athens, was intensely drawn to intellectual pursuits. Gregory of Nazianzus, who studied with Julian in Athens, understood Julian's compelling desire that future emperors would always love and support Athens, and as for himself, Gregory

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[5]Butler, *Story of Athens*, p.459.

[6]George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1969), p.460.

expressed his feelings when he wrote that 'Athens was truly golden for me, if for anyone - and the patroness of lovely things!'[7] As emperor, Julian endeavored to revive neoplatonism, but he failed, even though there existed a large number of pagans to support him. Christianity made rapid gains among the populace and its eventual triumph was expedited by the absorption of those elements of pagan philosophy which were compatible with its doctrines.

St. Basil the Great, who studied the classics in Athens, put this situation in perspective when he outlined for the Christians a useful attitude towards the classics. St. Basil argued:

> But that this pagan learning is not without usefulness; . . . but whenever they recount for you the deeds or words of good men, you ought to cherish and emulate these . . . but when they treat of wicked men, you ought to avoid such imitation.[8]

St. Basil also cautioned that:

> We shall certainly not imitate the orators in their art of lying. . . . but we shall take rather those passages of theirs in which they have praised virtue or condemned vice.[9]

In sum, St. Basil advised Christians to "let us guard ourselves against what is harmful . . . we should examine each of the branches of knowledge and adapt it to our end."[10]

The result of the mixture of pagan philosophy and Christian religion was evident in the fifth century. The general acceptance of a blending of classical philosophy and Christianity was exemplified by Athenais-Eudocia, the wife of Emperor Theodosius II (408-50), who came from Athens, and whose pagan

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[7]K.M. Setton, "Athens in the Later XIIth Century," *Speculum*, 19 (1944), 180. Data from Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat XLIII* (in *Lauden Basilii Magni*), 14, *Patrologia Graeca*, XXXVI, 513A.

[8]St. Basil the Great, *St. Basil: The Letters*, translated by R. J. Deferrari and M. R. P. McGuire, 4, 387-89, (Cambridge,Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934).

[9]Ibid., 391.

[10]Ibid., 393.

father was a professor.[11] Athenais-Eudocia remained loyal to her classical culture and to her new Christian principles. As Empress, she made every effort to influence Theodosius II in promoting the university in Constantinople, and its promulgation of classical Greek culture. The Greeks, by the fifth century, were called *Romaioi* and not *Hellenes*,[12] which indicated the official disfavor into which classical philosophy had fallen. This was particularly the case after the universities in Athens were closed in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian (527-65). As defender of the faith, the Emperor found the closing of the Greek universities an effective way to curtail the teaching of the pagan philosophy of neoplatonism.[13] Its classical heritage out of favor with the Roman rulers, Athens was no longer viewed as a cultural center. Instead it was seen as a provincial city, and remained on the periphery of the Roman Empire. Classical Athens survived many centuries with the support of those Roman Emperors, who paid homage to its classical traditions and who consequently extended special privileges and protection to the city. But with its universities closed, and Christianity becoming more powerful, classical Athens lost its favorable position. From this time, Athens' survival depended upon its connection to Constantinople, and to the influence the capital exerted upon the Roman Emperors.

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[11]Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, p.55.

[12]Heurtley, *Greece*, p.36.

[13]Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, p. 77.

Chapter 2
Survival of Byzantine Athens

Medieval Athens survived from the seventh century to the twelfth century despite the fact that the entire Roman Empire was besieged with various invasions of which the Slavs were the only group to affect Greece. The Slavs began their siege in the sixth century with constant raids which led to invasions and finally to settlement in the countryside of Greece. Heurtley admitted that it was impossible to document the Slavic pattern of settlement in Greece, but he did disagree with Isidore of Seville, who made a sweeping statement that the Romans lost Greece to the Slavs, and he inclined to agree with J. B. Bury that neither Athens nor its countryside had become Slavized.[1] Athens remained under the protection of the Byzantine Emperors, especially Justinian II (685-95), who in the seventh century defeated the Slavs, transported them to Asia Minor, and created the military *thema* (theme) of Hellas, with Athens as its center. The documents confirmed that the Hellas theme incorporated the territory of central Greece.[2] As for the few remaining Slavs, they were eventually assimilated through the Greek religion and language of the Byzantine Church.

Besides creating the military theme of Hellas, the Emperor Justinian II implemented tax reforms to protect the Athenian peasants who worked the soil and who, until those reforms, provided a major source of revenue. This change in taxation occurred in response to the new conditions resulting from the raids of the various Slavic tribes, which destroyed the system of *latifundia* that

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[1]Heurtley, *Greece*, p.40.

[2]Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, p. 132. See n.8, p.132 where the author stated that the first strategus of Hellas is mentioned in 695: Theophanes 368,20: Nicephorus 38,1.

existed in the early period of the seventh century. It also effected a change in the social and economic structure as more Athenian peasants became free and held lands, while the large estates decreased in number and size.

The survival of Attica and the Athenians depended upon the productivity of the soil. In Attica, compared to other parts of the Empire, the Athenians had their own provincial problems which added to their burdens. The peasants of Athens faced these problems: a shortage of fertilizer, heavy seasonal rains, and frequent summer droughts.[3] Nevertheless, the production of olives and grapes managed to grow under these rather difficult circumstances, and the land remained the basis of the economy.[4] Most Athenians were small landowners struggling to be productive and to meet their tax obligations. In addition, the peasants had to face the constant pressure of losing their land to the powerful large landowners. The imperial authority had sectioned the land according to the types of production and to the amount of land owned. This system of division aided the estimation of taxes on a fairer basis. A tax called *iugatio* was placed on the *iugum* (land) and production was taxed on the basis of the labor needed to be productive, namely, the *capitatio*, which included the *humana et animalium*. Because these two taxes were paid at the same time, they were often considered as one tax, and their names were used interchangeably.[5] The tax structure united the farmer to the land. The effects of these tax policies limited the farmer's freedom of movement. The farmer never left his property; at death, his son was responsible for the property and its obligations.

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[3]K.M. Setton, "On the Importance of Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation in the Byzantine Empire from the Fourth Century to the Fourth Crusade," *American Journal of Philology*, 74 (1953), 229.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., 227.

Justinian's tax reforms of the seventh century broke the link between the *capitatio* (head tax) and the *iugatio* (land tax). It made everyone, landowners and those without land, accountable for the head tax.[6] It also meant that the Athenian peasants, under the protective umbrella of the Emperor, were free from the *latifundia* and had gained freedom of movement.

To regulate the new group of free farmers, Justinian II put into use the *Farmer's Law*. The need to set up a standard set of rules implied that there were large communities of free farmers, as the *Law* was written especially for them by those in authority and it carried the power of enforcement.[7] The Empire continued to use the *Law* throughout the seventh and up to the eleventh century. According to Setton, this document provides much information about the ordinary free peasants living in Athens, but there seems to be some doubt as to the application of the *Law* specifically to Athens since it omits mention of olive production.[8] In any case, the Athenian farmers produced vineyards and the *Law* definitely included regulations for them.[9] Perhaps we can infer that the Athenian farmers had an established set of understood practices, prior to the *Law*, which involved the olive growers.

The document on taxes known as the *Treatise on Taxation*, provides information on the social and economic life both of the Athenians who clustered in *horion* (villages) and of those who chose to live apart in *ktisis* (hamlets) away from the villages.[10] These village units were still controlled by the imperial

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[6]Setton, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation," p.232.

[7]Ibid., 232-5.

[8]Ibid., 236.

[9]"The Farmer's Law," trans. and ed. W. Ashburner, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 30 (1910), 87-108. There are 14 articles on vineyards in both the English and Greek copies.

[10]Setton, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation," pp.237-8.

government through the tax officials who not only decided the rate of taxation, but who were also responsible for tax collection.

To these literary sources can be added the new evidence supplied by archaeology. The American excavators from the American Academy of Classical Studies at Athens were assigned sixteen acres of historical sites which included sections of the Areopagus, the Acropolis and the Agora.[11] Their finds contribute much to our knowledge of Athens' past. Although many discoveries dated from ancient Athens, only those dated from the late sixth century will be discussed here.

The archaeologists discovered a sixth century mill in the Agora, very near the Valerian Wall, which provides evidence of its destruction by fire about the time of the Slavic raids. In addition, 'several complete Christian lamps' were found in the area, along with coins, including those of three sixth century Emperors, Justin I, Justinian, and Justin II, covering the period from 518 to 578.[12] Within the boundaries of the Agora, the excavation produced a buckle made of bronze, together with coins minted by the Emperor Constans II (641-68) and other artifacts such as the *pithoi* (storage jars) which were used from the tenth century.[13]

In my opinion, it is worth mentioning the Valerian Wall, although it was built in the late third century, because evidence suggests that repairs were done in subsequent centuries possibly as late as the fourteenth. The Stoa of Attalus bears an inscription that confirms the fact that the Athenians built the Valerian

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[11]Setton, "Archaeology of Athens," p.230.

[12]Ibid., 234. Data from *Unpublished Excavators' Report* on file among *American Agora Records*, Athens, Greece.

[13]Ibid., 239.

Wall from the material of the buildings destroyed by raids, and that it was not built from the music of Amphion or from the Cyclops' powerful hand.[14]

Other buildings showing signs of destruction by fire, dated from the seventh to the ninth centuries, were found on the lower north section of the Acropolis. Found nearby as well was a new road, used during the time of the Burgundian rulers. In the Areopagus area, a building, dating from the sixth to the eighth centuries, containing furnaces indicated some type of industry.[15] The archaeologists have excavated many more buildings and artifacts, too numerous to mention here, though a few will be discussed below, in connection with literary sources.

An interesting evidence of the survival of Athens, and of the apparent interest that the emperors still had in Athens, was the amount of coins found in the Agora. These coins date from mid-sixth century to mid-ninth century (565-842). The largest group of coins, totaling 817, belonged to the Emperor Constans II (641-68). This fact can be related to his decision to stay in Athens during the winter of 662-63 with his large army.[16] Close analysis of these coins indicated that they were all minted at the time of the Emperor's stay, with the exception of five coins which were minted after 663.[17] The next largest find of 232 coins, was minted by Heraclius (610-41), the grandfather of Constans II,

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[14]Setton, "Archaeology of Athens," pp.240-1. Data from *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Vols. 11-111(2), Part III: *Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores*, fasc.1 (Berlin,1935), No.5200a: ου ταδε θελξιμελησ Αμφιονισ ηρα {ρε φορμιγξ},ουδε κυκλωπειασ χειροσ εδ{ειμε βια}.

[15]Ibid., 241.

[16]Peter Charanis, "The Significance of Coins as Evidence for the History of Athens and Corinth in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," in *Studies on the Demography of the Byzantine Empire*, (London: Variorum Reprints, 1972), p.164. Data from Margaret Thompson, *The Athenian Agora*, Results of Excavations conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Vol. 2, (Princeton, New Jersey,1954), 67-76.

[17]Ibid., 167.

and together, their coins totaled 1049 from the seventh century period of 610 to 668. Unfortunately, no literary source can explain the connection between Athens and Heraclius.[18] Of particular interest to me, and attesting to the survival of Athens, is the fact that coins were found for most emperors from the sixth to eighth centuries, except Leontius (695-8), who ruled for less than four years, and Theodosius III (715-7), who ruled for less than three years. As for the three consecutive Emperors of the ninth century, literary sources were available for Nicephorus I (802-11), but Staurakios (811) ruled less than a year, and Michael I (812-l3), ruled only one year.[19] These two last Emperors may not have had sufficient time to mint or to circulate their coins.

Beginning with Justinian (685-95), few coins were found for the remaining emperors, with the exceptions of two Emperors, Philippicus (711-3) and Leo III (717-41), but there are no sources to connect Athens with them. It is suggested by the evidence of these two exceptions that Helias, who was sent by Philippicus to Rome with the decapitated head of Justinian II, may have stopped in Athens, and that Leo III may have visited Athens to make reforms after the revolt in the Hellas theme.[20] On the other hand, even the few coins found minted by the other emperors showed involvement with Athens, as documented in the literary sources. Justinian II, for example, created the Hellas theme between 687-95, Constantine V (741-775), transferred people from the Hellas theme to the capital after the plague took its toll, made a request for 500 craftsmen to repair the aqueduct, and chose Irene, an Athenian, to be the bride of his son.[21]

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[18]Charanis, "Coins as Evidence for the History of Athens," pp.165-7.

[19]Ibid., 165-6. Read data from table, my interpretation.

[20]Ibid., 165-8.

[21]Ibid., 164-5. Data from Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. by C.de Boor, I,(Leipzig,1883), 368,429,444,440.

The conclusion reached by Charanis is that the scarcity of coins indicated an economic decline, which coincides with the appearance of the powerful Arabian navy, forcing Athens toward a non-monetary economy. Charanis succinctly states, however, that "at no time during the period . . . [seventh and eighth centuries] did Athens cease to be a Byzantine possession."[22]

In the previous discussion, the activities of the Emperor Constantine V (741-75) in relation to Athens and the Hellas theme have been mentioned and cited, yet, further comments are necessary. The facts that Constantine V transferred to Constantinople a number of the inhabitants from the Hellas theme in 747 to replace the population lost by the plague, and in 767, transported 500 skilled workers, of which some of those must have been Athenians, to restore the capital's damaged aqueduct, attest not only to the survival of Athens but to its economic stability and its continuing relationship with the Emperor. No evidence could be more convincing than the decision made by the Emperor in 769 to select Irene, a beautiful and educated Athenian, to be the bride of his son Leo. Irene came from the prominent social family of Serantapechus whose uncle held the post of *strategus* (general) in the theme of Hellas.[23] She was a Christian and worshipped the icons, a pagan practice which had developed into the Christian Churches of Athens, but which contradicted the prevailing Christian thoughts of the imperial court. In order to marry the future Leo IV, Irene had to renounce this practice, which she did. But as Empress, she obtained toleration for the private use of icons and received support from the monks who favored their use.[24] Even so, Icon worship

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[22]Charanis, "Coins as Evidence for the History of Athens," p.170. My insertion in brackets.

[23]Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-842* (Stanford: University Press, 1988), p.113.

[24]Ibid., 6.

continued to be an issue, and later, Irene, as regent to her son, Constantine VI (780-797), and again during her reign (797-802), promoted the restoration of icons and built new churches in her native Athens.[25] In Constantinople, the Empress Irene continued to gather support from the iconophiles among the members of the church, the civil servants and the monasteries.[26]

In the ninth century, Emperor Nicephorus (802-11) further developed the military theme of Hellas by the colonization of soldier farmers and by increasing the Greek element in the surrounding towns. Also he created the new theme of Peloponnesus from the distant land of the peninsula, which added to the security of the Hellas theme, and of Athens, which was its center. By 811, Nicephorus had increased the armies of the two themes from two thousand men to eight thousand.[27] Along with the policy of colonization, the Emperor implemented a new and reformed system of taxation.

Nicephorus, prior to becoming emperor, had been the most effective *logothete* under the Empress Irene. His tax reforms in 810 eliminated exemptions which were given to the churches and to the monasteries by the overly generous Irene. As Emperor, Nicephorus called for a census to be taken, in order that taxes could be fairly assessed. Subsequently, he increased taxes and instituted the *kapnikon* (hearth tax) which was paid by everyone and which was treated as the collective responsibility of each village.[28] These reforms stabilized the economy of the Byzantine Empire, of the Hellas theme and in turn of that of Athens.

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[25]Butler, *Story of Athens*, p. 476.

[26]Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, p.124.

[27]Ibid., 190.

[28]Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, p.188. Ostrogorsky stated that the Καπνικον had never appeared in a document prior to this time.

A different point of view expressed by the chronicler Theophanes, a monk, was not favorable. Theophanes listed the evils that Nicephorus had committed. Of the colonization policy, Theophanes wrote that the Emperor:

> ordered Christians from every theme, under pain of compulsion to sell their property and to go and settle in the Sclavinian areas [Hellas theme and the new theme of Peloponnesus]. But it was a question of nothing less than slavery.[29]

A second evil Theophanes mentions concerns the treatment of the soldier farmers when the Emperor:

> ordered poor [farmers] to be conscripted into the army and to be armed by fellow farmers who were jointly [allelengyos] to provide eighteen and one-half *nomismata* . . . as taxes for the poor farmers.[30]

A third evil had to do with the census, which meant that, under the Emperor's orders:

> the property of each person be re-examined and that the taxes be increased so that each had to pay two additional *keratia* as an administrative fee.[31]

Theophanes' next complaint was the decision to revoke exemptions from taxation. Theophanes lists as a fifth evil its effect and explains that:

> from churches, and imperial monasteries, he [the Emperor] demanded that the hearth tax be paid, extending from the first year of his tyranny onward[32]

Theophanes listed many more complaints and summed up his attitude towards Nicephorus when he wrote that the Emperor's actions "reveal his shrewdness in every kind of machination".[33] In spite of Theophanes' complaints, the tax reforms of Nicephorus were successful and remained in place for a long period of

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[29]Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), 1, 486-87, trans. Deno J. Geanakoplos in *Byzantium* (Chicago: University Press, 1984), p.60. The insertion in brackets is mine.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid. Two keratia equals one-twelfth *nomisma* (one gold coin).

[32]Ibid. My insertion in brackets.

[33]Ibid.

time.

In 839, the Emperor Theophilus instituted the new military division of the *bandum* throughout the Empire, including Athens. These local units consisted of two hundred soldiers that were led by a count, who was not only the commander but a representative of the Emperor, and therefore, the connecting link to the central government.[34]

All was not peaceful in the ninth century. One major disruption faced Athens, the infestation of trade routes to the city by piratical Arabs, who consistently raided the shores of Greece. By 827, Arabian pirates from Spain had occupied the island of Crete where they developed a stronghold from which to raid the islands of the Aegean or as the contemporary Greek writer, Genesius, wrote 'from which they launch attacks upon Roman territories.'[35] As a result, Crete was loss to the Christian world for over a century.

The attacks by the Arabs were persistent and widespread. One such attack occurred on the island of Euboea, next to Athens. Fortunately, for the city, the *strategus* of the Hellas theme, Oeniates, defeated the Arabs, destroyed the greater part of their thirty ships, and decimated their force of fighting men.[36] Another attack in 879, this time not as close to Athens, took place on the shores of the Peloponnesus. The Emperor Basil (867-86) sent Admiral Nasar to help the *strategus* of the theme and again the Arabs were defeated.[37]

Although the Arab raids continued for several centuries, there is no

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[34]Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, p.347.

[35]Setton, "On the Raids of the Moslem in the Aegean in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries and their Alleged Occupation of Athens," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 58, No. 4 (October,1954), 311. Quote from Jos. Genesius, *Basileiai*, II(de Michaele II) ed. Bonn, p.49.

[36]Ibid. Data from Theophanes-Continuator, *Chronographia*, (de Basilio Macedone), 59 (Bonn, pp.298-9).

[37]Ibid., 312. Data from Theoph. Cont.,*Chronographia*, V, 61-3, (Bonn, pp.300-4).

evidence of permanent settlements by the Arabs in the Peloponnesus. Inscriptions, however, have been found in Attica as well as several pieces of architecture which have *Cufic* (distinguishing Arabic) designs, indicating that some type of Arabic settlement did exist there. *Cufic* designs are found on churches in Athens that were built in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. A possible explanation is the importation of skilled Arabic workers during the expansive Athenian building program of the late tenth century. It may also be possible that, as the scholar, Kampouroglous claims, the Moslems attacked and settled Athens by force. If these skilled workers came from a settled Arabic community, then, according to Setton, an Arabic occupation could have occurred during the reign of Emperor Leo VI (886-912), who was unable to defeat the Moslem attacks but the question, of whether these skilled workers "lived there as conquerors or as captives" still remains.[38]

As for Kampouroglous, he based his conclusion on the evidence of the poem known as the 'Lament of Athens', which he dates from the defeat of Athens by the Saracens between 896-902. Most of the Byzantine scholars date the poem from 1456 when Athens fell to the Turks.[39] As additional evidence to the poem, Kampouroglous points to the omission of Greek inscriptions during these six years.[40] Other evidence he presents is not as convincing as those presented by archaeology. Indeed, *Cufic* designs and inscriptions have been found that prove that Moslems had a mosque built upon the ruins of

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[38]Setton, "Raids of the Moslem," p.314.

[39]Ibid., 315. Data from Η Αλωσισ των Αθηνων των Σαρακηνων, Athens, 1934, p.52. Book cited as *Capture of Athens*.

[40]Ibid. Data from Kampouroglous, *Capture of Athens*, pp.170-1.

Asclepieum.[41] Interestingly, these works of Arabic art were created on the local material of Athens, specifically, *Hymettic* marble. Other Arabic works constructed later than the eleventh century were done on *Pentelic* marble.[42] The discovery of five Christian churches in Athens built in the eleventh century revealed the *Cufic* designs in combination with animals pictured on plaques. This *Graeco-Cufic* style originated in Athens and eventually proliferated throughout Greece.[43]

Setton and many prominent scholars discount the 'Lament of Athens' as evidence, maintaining that the description of Athens' defeat refers to the capture of the city in the fifteenth century by the Turks.[44] The archaeological evidence confirms the existence of an Athenian Moslem community, and the construction of a mosque in the tenth century, but no evidence to date has explained definitely how Arabs happened to settle in Athens. Setton suggests that the Arabs may have been captured during the many tenth century warfare activities that occurred in the Aegean Sea, particularly those involving the Emir Damiana. He also asserts that these Moslems may have become Christians or entered the imperial service.[45] One known example involves an Arab called Chases, who was still a Moslem and who worked for the Emperor Constantine VII (913-59). Chases apparently made himself so repugnant to the people of Athens that they stoned him inside the church within the walls of the

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[41]Setton, "Raids of the Moslem," p.316. Data from Kampouroglous, *Capture of Athens*, pp.178-81. See also Geo. Soteriou, "Arabic Decorations on the Byzantine Monuments of Greece" (in Greek), *BNJ*, II(1934-5), 266-7. The inscriptions were dated in the eleventh century by the Mufti Hamdullah of Constantinople.

[42]Ibid., 316-7.

[43]Ibid., 317-8. Data from Soteriou in Kampouroglous, *Capture of Athens*, pp.164-5.

[44]Ibid., 318.

[45]Ibid., 319.

Parthenon.[46] Enough evidence exists for the scholars to agree with Kampouroglous, about the presence of Moslems in Athens, and about the fact that their presence sheds some light on why there were no Athenian churches discovered pre-dating the eleventh century,[47] but no convincing evidence exists that Athens was taken by military attacks prior to 1456.

Between the seventh and the eleventh centuries, there was a growth of the Orthodox Church up to the eleventh century, old churches were repaired, new churches were built and the spiritual movement of monasticism grew in size. During this period of ecclesiastical growth, in the ninth century in particular, Athens was not neglected by Constantinople. The Patriarch Photius (858-867) selected the archbishop of Athens to be the metropolitan of the Orthodox Church, which turned out to be one of the most important see in the Empire.[48] Nearly two centuries later, Athens was the scene of the triumphant action from battle of Emperor Basil II (976-1025), who went to the cathedral to give thanks for his victories and left many splendid gifts.

The Athenians, in the tenth century, faced the unfavorable condition of extremely high taxes and blamed the Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (920-44) but they took out their frustration on the governor of the Hellas theme for this greed by revolting and stoning him.[49] Romanus I had implemented many land reforms on behalf of the peasants such as the ruling of 922 which stated that the

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[46]Setton, "Raids of the Moslem," p.319. Data from Constantine Porphyrogen, *De adm. imperio*, 50, ed. G. Moravcsik, trans. R.H. Jenkins, (Budapest,1949), p.242; ed. Bonn, pp.230-1. See chroniclers, Theophanes Cont., p.388; Simeon Magister, *Chronographia*, p.723; Geo. Monachus, *Impp.*, p.880. All edited by Bonn.

[47]Ibid., 318. See Soteriou, Ευρετηριον των μεσαιωνικων μνημειων τησ Ελλαδοσ, Pt.1 (1927), p.46.

[48]Butler, *Story of Athens*, p.478.

[49]A. Kazhdan, *People and Power in Byzantium* (Washington,D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Center for Byzantine Studies, 1982), p.151. Data from Theophanes Continuatus, 388.8-10;443.13-18.

dynatoi (powerful) were not allowed to take possessions from the *eutelesteroi* (humble) by any methods unless they were related.[50] Although there were setbacks due to plague and famine, the Emperor in 934 showed his continued support for the peasantry when he explained that the laws were not made against the powerful with hatred, but declared 'for the love of the poor, for their protection, and for the common safety'.[51] Romanus I was referring to the new laws decreed that year, which stressed the importance of keeping the pesantry working in order to provide tax revenue and to support the military. In addition, the Emperor knew it was necessary to stop those "who abet the disruption of civil stability and to uphold the common welfare".[52]

By the time Nicephorus II Phocas (963-69) became emperor, it was again necessary to reform the tax system in order to bring order to the Empire. The previous laws favored the peasants to such an extent that they resulted in unfairness to the powerful, since the poor received *protimesis* (preference) to purchase lands belonging to the *dynatoi*. To be fair to everyone, Nicephorus II revised the law to state that:

> just as we forbid the *stratiotai* and *penetes* from purchasing possessions of the *dynatoi*, thus also we forbid the latter to purchase lands of the poor and also of impecunious *stratiotai*.[53]

During this period, the Athenians hoped for the cancellation of all unpaid taxes

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[50]*Jus graecoromanum*, edited by J. and P. Zepos, (Athens, 1931), I, 201-2, trans. Deno J. Geanakoplos in *Byzantium*, p.240.

[51]Setton, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation," pp.240-1. Data taken from Zachariae von Lingenthal, *Jus graeco-romanum,* pars.III: *Novellae constitutiones*, (Leipzig,1857), Coll.III, nov V, p.246.

[52]*Jus graecoromanum*, I, 207-13, trans. Deno J. Geanokoplos in *Byzantium*, p.242.

[53]Ibid., 253-54, trans. Deno J. Geanakoplos in *Byzantium*, p.244.

which they owed to the tax officials.[54] Apparently, there existed widespread resentment of the oppressive imperial taxes among the peasantry to which cause may be attributed the many peasant revolts that occurred in the following century.[55]

It is generally accepted by historians that during this period, the Athenians were part of the population of the Empire that was further unified by the Orthodox religion. However, at least one historian, Kazhdan disagrees and holds the opposite view, that order was restored in the tenth century based only "on loose social organization and turned artificially toward a glorious past".[56] In any case, the economic order that spread to the provinces continued to the twelfth century.[57] This continued economic progress was made possible by the emperors of the tenth century, who supported both the peasants of the villages and the military men supplied by estates. The tenth century emperors were aware of the importance of the peasantry and the soldiers, and recognized these two groups of people as the backbone of the empire.[58] The Emperor Constantine VII (913-59) protected the peasantry against the large landowners and the Emperor Basil II (976-1025) attempted to weaken the power of the landowners by forcing them to pay the taxes, *allelengyon* (surtax), due on the abandoned properties, which lighten the tax burden on the peasantry.[59] In

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[54]Setton, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation," p.151. Data from Pseudo-Lucian, "Philopatris" in *Lucian*, ed. M. D. Macleod, 8, (London,1967) 450, cap.20.

[55]Kazhdan, *People in Byzantium*, p.151. Data from Litavrin, *Obscestvo*, 262.

[56]Ibid., 155.

[57]Ibid., 57. Data from D. M. Metcalf, *Coinage in the Balkans*, (Thessalonica,1965), pp.25,36.

[58]Setton, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation," p.240. See n.29, of Ostrogorsky in *V.S.W.G.*, XX, pp.14-16.

[59]Ibid., 241-2. Data from texts, see John Danstrup, *Classica et Mediaevalia*, VIII, (1946), 256-62.

addition, Basil II declared in 996 that the actions of the *dynatoi* who had purchased land from the poor in the past were illegal because time had no validity as a method to be used against the poor. The Emperor Basil wanted these possessions returned to the poor. He also reminded the landowners that their actions violated as well the past laws of Romanus I, since no time period was mentioned, "he meant that he forbade them forever and for eternity".[60]

The picture changed in the eleventh century under the Emperor Romanus III Argrus (1028-1034), who did not favor the existing decrees. Romanus III's position gave the large magnates the opportunity to win control over desputed lands. Once the peasantry lost the support of the Emperor, the powerful landowners (both secular and ecclesiastical) were given *exkousseia* (exemptions) from taxation. These exemptions eventually lessen the control of the imperial government, and slowly the magnates gained a powerful hold on public control.

The magnates continued to strengthen their position against the succeeding emperors of the eleventh century, who were not very forceful leaders. Michael Psellus, an imperial official who liked personally Constantine IX Monomachus (1042-54), nevertheless, wrote that Constantine was not a forceful ruler, and that he acted without discretion. Further, he exhausted the treasury and granted titles "indiscriminately on a multitude of persons".[61] Psellus stated that Constantine IX simply did not know how to be a ruler or how to be accountable for the welfare of his people. In his summary of the Emperor's qualifications, Psellus wrote that to Constantine IX, the use of power " meant

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[60]*Jus graecoromanum*, I, 263-67, trans. Deno J. Geanakoplos in *Byzantium*, p.247.

[61]Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*, trans. E. Sewter, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1953), pp.124-25.

rest from his labours, fulfilment of his desire, relaxation from strife".[62] Adding to the turmoil, was the practice of granting immunity, a system by which land was given to the large landowners who would in turn provide the emperor with men for military service. These lands were known as *pronoiai* and the relationship of patronage was called *prostasia*.[63] Constantine IX referred clearly to the use of *pronoia* during the eleventh century. The system of *pronoia* became necessary to provide military service due to the decline of the Empire, the loss of revenue and the inability of the imperial government to collect taxes.[64] It also became necessary to use tax farmers to collect taxes for the Empire. Tax farmers added more problems, since they proved an expensive way to collect taxes, and they did not always provide an efficient method, especially as a result of their greed and abuse of the tax system. The burden fell on the common people, and their hardship undermined social harmony and alienated them from the emperor and his officials.

Another form of grant, the *charistikion*, affected lands given to monasteries. The land itself was called *charistikarios* and it provided the means by which monks could support their communities and maintain their buildings; and in return, the monks performed the religious services. Another benefit to the monks was the fact that they were allowed to keep the revenue made above their expenses.[65] There were patriarchs who opposed such grants and terminated them, but then others, one example being Patriarch Serguis II in 1016, saw their practical value and renewed them. To avoid any abuses,

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[62]Psellus, *Chronographia*, pp.131-32.

[63]Setton, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation," p.244.

[64]Ibid., 255-6.

[65]Ibid., 245.

Serguis II put the monasteries under the control of the church.[66]

That such abuses did occur is documented in relation to the Church of Athens in the petition written by Nicetas III, the Athenian metropolitan. In this petition, Nicetas III accused the former metropolitan, John V Blachernites (who died in 1086) of mismanagement of the Church of Athens, and asked if those decrees which contradicted established practices could be invalidated. In addition, the metropolitan questioned the original application of these decrees to the *proasteia* (other properties) of the Church of Athens.[67]

Archbishop Nicetas III continued his investigation of church properties beyond the city gates but within the immediate vicinity of the city. These *enthuria* were in the hands of the secular people of Athens, as were the *autourgia* (working properties) such as the vineyards, and Nicetas III wanted them returned to the control of the Church of Athens. Included in the properties he wanted returned were the monasteries which had fallen into the hands of powerful secular people and bishops as donations.[68] This petition for return of properties was presented to the Patriarch Nicholas III Grammaticus (1084-1111), and on April 20, 1089, a synod, which recorded an unusual detailed document, was held in Constantinople to act upon the petition.[69] The ecclesiastical powers could see that the increase of land held by the large landowners in Attica came from obtaining monasteries and lands that formally belonged to the Church of Athens. Thus, with the loss of monasteries, interest in the monastic life waned, religious services declined, and the church lost its

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[66]Setton, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation," p.247.

[67]Ibid., 248-9.

[68]Ibid., 250.

[69]Ibid., 248. Data from Th.I. Uspenskii, *Izv. russk. Arkh. Instit. v Kpole*, V (1900), pp.32-41.

primary means of support and revenue.[70]

The Byzantine Empire declined in the eleventh century as feudalism became the dominant social and political system. The power of the emperor, who previously had been the protector of the people, now fell into the hands of the magnates who performed the public functions of the Empire. The last Emperor of the eleventh century, Alexius I, made no attempt to change this situation. The Emperor was a large landowner and allied himself with the magnates, who consequently supported him in the many campaigns fought to defend the Empire. Nicetas Choniates, the historian, does not fault Alexius I, who was concerned with the needs of the Empire, but puts the blame on the twelfth century Angeli Emperors (1185-1204) for the many revolts against the magnates that happened in many places.[71]

Regardless of these developments, Byzantine Athens prospered through trade. The trade which sustained Athens and the entire Empire centered in the capital of Constantinople. Its position as the gateway to three continents enabled trade to flourish despite periods of political and military disruptions, decline, and destruction. Constantinople prepared itself for these aberrations by fortification and by the assurance of supplies of food, and men for military service from the provinces. With this concentration of control in the capital, the Empire could protect itself from invaders. If Constantinople fell, the Empire would be destroyed.[72] With Constantinople as a military buffer, Athens' commercial life continued, despite many battles and the defeats suffered by the Byzantine Empire in 1071, mainly at the hands of the Normans, led by Robert

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[70]Setton, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation," pp.251-2.

[71]Ibid., 254. Data from Nicetas Chononiates *De Isaacio Angelo*, III, 2 (Bonn, p.553).

[72]Ibid., 230.

Guiscard (who captured Bari in the West) and the Seljuk Turks (who defeated the Byzantine forces at Manzikert). It was only by the efforts of the capable Alexius I (1081-1118) that Constantinople survived.

Archaeological evidence from the eleventh century revealed a newly-invented boat that was small and inexpensive to build, and that was used for coastal local trade. These boats were found in the area of Constantinople as well as in the provinces, particularly Athens and Corinth.[73] The dating of these boats corresponds to the eleventh century period of urban growth in Athens, where there had been a parallel increase in the number of churches built and in the size of the soap and dye industries.[74]

The discovery of late eleventh century buildings, and the equipment of "vats and basins", along with coins of Alexius I (1081-1118) and Manuel I (1143-80) indicates the presence of a factory area where cloth was dyed. Since the destruction of the area took place mid-twelfth century, it could be connected to the raid on Athens by Roger of Sicily in 1147.[75] In the same year, the Sicilians attacked Thebes, and destroyed the silk industry, along with kidnapping the silk craftsmen and stealing their equipment. One controversial source, indicates that Roger also removed silk workers from Athens and Corinth as he had done in Thebes.[76] Although Athens was somewhat affected by these raids, the Greeks remained active in the silk trade, which continued to flourish

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[73]Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire,1025-1204* (New York: Longman, 1984), p.64.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Setton, "Archaeology of Athens," p.251.

[76]Setton, "Athens-XIIth Century," p.195. Data from Otto of Freising, *Fridericus Imperator*, I, 33 (MGH, *Scriptores*, XX, 370): 'Inde ad interiora Graeciae progressi, Corinthum, Thebas, Athenas, antiqua nobilitate celebres expugnant ... opifices etiam, qui sericos pannos texere solent, ob ignominiam imperatoris illius suique principis gloriam captivos deducunt'.

through the thirteenth century, during the period of the Franks.[77] The existence of an Athenian silk trade was observed by Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveler, who wrote that a large number of Jewish families were supported by the prosperous silk industry.[78] Benjamin wrote that after he left Corinth, he proceeded "to the great city of Thebes, where there are about 2,000 Jews. They are the most skilled artificers in silk and purple cloth throughout Greece."[79] Even though Benjamin visited only Thebes, not Athens, we know from the Archbishop Michael that Athens supplied the dye for the cloth made in Thebes, since it was the Athenians who specialized in purple fishing. Of course, Michael's approach to productive labor was positive and he explained that people only liked their tools for their practical means.[80]

Archaeologists made further discoveries. They described the market places, the *agorai*, of Athens as having many narrow lanes leading into large courtyards surrounded by buildings and churches though some agricultural fields still existed within Athen's walls. Along with the markets, industrial buildings were identified, where the manufacturing of soap and dye was done. The excavation of the quarter where the purple fishes were taken revealed the dyehouse with its equipment and its appropriate name of *konkhyliaria*.[81] The Athenians did not have many opportunities for industry, but fishing for mussels known as *koghelea*, from which came purple dye, took place on the island of

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[77]Nicolas Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece* (New Haven,Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), p.40.

[78]Sir Rennell Rodd, *The Princes of Achaia and the Chronicles of Morea* (London: E. Arnold, 1907), p.148.

[79]A. Asher, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, Travels in the Middle Ages* ({Malibu,CA}: Joseph Simon Publisher, 1983), p.68.

[80]Kazhdan, *People in Byzantium*, p.159. Data from Mich.Ak., 1:109.28-30.

[81]Angold, *Byzantine Empire*, p.248.

Gyaros.[82] Archaeological evidence indicates that in the industry carried on by Athens, Thebes, and Corinth, Athens supplied soap and dye to Corinth, a textile center, and to Thebes, famous for its silk. Angold notes the unusual division of product and skill during this period of the Byzantine Empire. This division is confirmed by the actions of the metropolitan of Athens, who had to turn to the small town of Gardiki (which specialized in agricultural equipment), for metal work. As Michael complained, there were no workers of metal, 'the bellows have failed us, there is no worker in iron among us no worker in brass, no maker of knives'.[83] The Hellas theme developed its economic system through specialization, though no single cause can be cited for this development. In spite of economic specialization, the theme kept its eleventh century political structure.[84]

By the end of the twelfth century, medieval Athens was still under the control of the Byzantine Emperor. The system of themes, which was created and completed in the seventh and eight centuries, was still in force. One particular change in the twelfth century involved putting the themes of Hellas and Peloponnesus under one official.[85] With the exception of the area of the Ionian sea, where Vetrano (a Genoese pirate) had established an Italian community, most of Greece remained within the protection of the Byzantine Empire.

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[82]Setton, "Athens-XIIth Century," p.196. The author used κογχυλυα, I transliterated the word. Data from *Mich. Acom., Ep.135, 2* (Lampros, II, 275).

[83]Angold, *Byzantine Empire*, p.249. Data from *Michael Choniates*, (ed.by Sp. Lampros) II,p.12. III,2-22.

[84]Ibid.

[85]William Miller, *The Latins in the Levant, A History of Frankish Greece, 1204-1566* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1908), p.2. Data from Lampros, Μιχαηλ Ακομινατου, i,157; Αι Αθηναι περι τα τελη τοι δωδεκατου αλωνοσ, 25-6.

The system of themes had served the Empire well. Each theme represented a territorial division. For example, the Hellas theme included Attica, Boeotia, Phokis, Lakris, part of Thessaly and the islands of Euboea and Aegina.[86] Beside the exception noted above for this period, each theme had its own *strategus* in command. In the case of Athens, it was the center of the Hellas theme from the time of its founding in the seventh century through the twelfth century, when Thebes became the center for both themes, Hellas and Peloponnesus. Every military theme protected its own territory, which included its civil divisions. Depending on the size of the theme, further military divisions were made into sections called *turmae* led by a *turmarch*. If necessary, a smaller unit was formed of one thousand men called a *drungus*, led by a *drungarius*.[87]

The Hellas theme contained peoples from different backgrounds, but most of them had been exposed to the Hellenic race and generally had become Hellenized. The Hellenic culture sustained the Greek language in its daily secular activities as well as through the Orthodox church. Athens, as a fortified city in which Christian Greeks lived, had been instrumental in promoting both the Orthodox religion and the Greek language.

The twelfth century also saw the increasing prominence of Italians in commerce and trade. At first medieval trade was carried on in a regular fashion responding to immediate market conditions. As a result, traders were subjected to the various abuses, in particular excessive fees and tolls of all sorts. In addition, there were expenses for the use of buildings in which to conduct business and to live. These conditions finally prompted the Italian merchants to

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[86]Miller, *Latins*, p.1.

[87]Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, p.14.

seek special treatment. The Byzantine Empire, in need of commerce and of trading ships, made concessions to the Italian merchants by providing them with necessary facilities and just treatment, which was provided by the *mitata* of Constantinople.[88] The Empire concluded a treaty with Venice in 1199 which allowed free trade in the entire Byzantine Empire, affecting both Thebes and Athens.[89] Later, additional privileges were also given to Pisa and to Genoa, cities which had maintained close commercial contact with Constantinople since 1155.

As a result of these special concessions, designated areas were assigned to Italian traders, and these developed into merchant quarters known as *fondaco*.[90] In this situation, Italian merchants were able to undersell the Athenian merchants and those of the entire Empire, because of the various tax privileges they had been granted. From the writings of the Archbishop Michael, we know about his complaints to the imperial government, in which he stressed the hardship of the Athenians because of the special status extended to the Italian merchants.[91] Nevertheless, stable conditions of commercial trade were found throughout the Empire. Athens not only shared in this trade, but depended on it for survival.

Athens must have faired well, as we know that Nicholas Hagiotheodorites, who was the archbishop of the city during the twelfth century, shipped food to the peoples of the coastal towns of Italy. At least one unpublished document

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[88]Gerald W. Day, *Genoa's Response to Byzantium* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p.5.

[89]Miller, *Latins*, p.5.

[90]Day, *Genoa's Response*, p.5.

[91]Charles M. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West, 1180-1204* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p.7.

confirms this fact, stating that grain was sent to the people of the coastal region of the Adriatic and Sicily by Nicholas.[92] The name of the Archbishop Nicholas was carved on the pillars of the west section of the Parthenon along with others, indicating his position as an Athenian metropolitan.[93]

Since one official governed both the Hellas and Peloponnesus themes, and since this official established headquarters in Thebes, Athens no longer was the center of the Hellas theme. Unfortunately for Athens, the official who went by the various titles of *praetor, protopraetor* or *strategos*[94] assessed a higher tax rate on Athens than he did for the more prosperous cities such as Thebes. Therefore, Athens was responsible to supply more ships and men for protection against piracy. The metropolitan, in his letters, complained about the high quota for men and ships imposed on Athens, but he detested even more that the Athenians were "required to furnish . . . anything else demanded by the abominable ship-money collectors."[95] The city's contribution had to be given to the official of the theme, and to the subordinate official, the archon of Nauplia, namely, Leon Sgouros. In this period, the local officials and the large land holding families were very powerful and exerted more control than the emperor. But conditions in Greece did immediately reflect the weakening Byzantine government, and its loss of control to the wealthy landowners. The provincial authority gained the freedom to oppress the local people and to raise their own armies for use in private wars and in their struggle for power. The governors,

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[92]Kazhdan, *People in Byzantium*, p.56. Data from the unpublished eulogy by Eustathius of Thessalonica in MS Escorial Y-II-10 (fol.35).

[93]Setton, "Athens-XIIth Century," p.185. Data from Lampros (1878), 20-24.

[94]Miller, *Latins*, p.6. Data came from the governor's seal reported by Lampros, Αι Αθηναι, 25.

[95]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.152. Selected data from the reprint of letter by Michael Choniates, Υπομνηστικον, TS II, pp.105-7.

who headed the provinces, did not receive direct payment from the Empire, therefore, they depended on their position for support. This additional demand increased the economic burden of the people.

Another problem facing Athens was the increase in piracy. Pirates clustered around the nearby islands, and even the Athenian church had difficulty in collecting its revenue after its property on the island of Aegina had been destroyed.[96] But Athens and its countryside, not receiving any support from the Byzantine navy, tenaciously held onto their independence.[97] Athens and the coastal cities continued to use Greek ships to maintain trade with Constantinople and to reach the trade routes of the Black Sea. The Athenians could not do otherwise, since they were no match against such powerful men as Stryphnos, the Grand Admiral of the Navy, who profited by pillaging the ships and supplies which he was empowered to protect.[98]

Also in the twelfth century, the Orthodox church gained important status in Greek society. The ecclesiastical structure of the church came under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople. Authority over the Empire was divided among twelve metropolitans, of which one was located in Athens since the ninth century. Under the metropolitans, sub-divisions of archbishoprics were established. One sub-division was found in Thebes. This well organized system, led by metropolitans who were educated men, especially in the classics, had been in existence for centuries. One of the most outstanding metropolitan of this period was Michael Choniates of Chonae.

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[96]Miller, *Latins*, p.9.

[97]Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, p.43.

[98]Setton, "Athens-XIIth Century," p.192. Data from Mich, Accom., *Address to the Grand Duke Stryphnos*, 19 (Lampros I,331).

Archaeological evidence suggests that no parishes existed in Athens. This evidence is supported by the fact that Athens was divided into quarters, unlike Thessalonica and other cities, which were sectioned into parishes. Additional support for this view of Athens' organization comes from inscriptions on eleventh century churches, which indicates that the churches were supported financially by private individuals.[99]

During the Comneni dynasty (1081-1185) the monasteries in the countryside around Athens also grew, and increased their power and influence. Two of the most famous monasteries were the Abbey of Kaisariani, situated beautifully among refreshing springs and green vegetation in the foothills of Hymettos, and the magnificent Byzantine monastery of Daphni, located in the mountain pass between Athens and Eleusis.[100]

Fortunately, the people of Athens found a benefactor in the Archbishop Michael of Chonae, a scholar of the classics, who was appointed metropolitan in 1175. In one major work on medieval Greek history, the author recounts how excited the archbishop was about his appointment to Athens; how he moved his private classical books to his palace on the Acropolis; how he cared about the Parthenon; how he was depressed over the poor condition of Athens; and how concerned he was over the disappearance of ancient monuments.[101] Though the Parthenon had been converted to a cathedral, it still contained the beautiful gifts that the Emperor Basil II (976-1025) placed in it, particularly the golden dove above the altar; the Archbishop Michael proudly wrote of how he added to

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[99]Angold, *Byzantine Empire*, p.251.

[100]Miller, *Latins*, p.19.

[101]Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, pp.44-5. Cheetham wondered why the Archbishop Michael did not mention the Byzantine Churches and the monasteries that were still in existence.

the Parthenon's beauty, expanded its property, and increased the number of its priests.[102] The archbishop wrote to Michael Autoreianas to express his deep feelings about the ancient Athenians, saying that 'we may still enjoy the same loveliness of the countryside, . . . the same Acropolis, too, where I sit now, as I write, and seem to bestride the very peak of heaven'.[103] In spite of these sentiments, it is clear that Athens had been in decline for much of the preceding 150 years (since the visit of Basil II in 1018). One sign of this decline was the absence of the usual gift from Athens to the Emperor Isaac when he ascended the throne in 1185.[104]

In his writings, Choniates tells us that the clergy of the acropolis were indifferent to their classical surroundings, and that the priest in charge of the holy items was blind and uneducated. Michael showed his frustration with this situation when he refers to these priests as wicked.[105] In addition, the archbishop was distressed over their religious attitudes and their lack of education. When the archbishop expressed his concern to the congregation of his church, they were not impressed with his point of view even if they had understood him. Michael stressed the importance of their heritage from the ancient Athenians, and suggested that twelfth century Athens could be equal to its past if it were but moralistic in spirit. But above all, he reminded them of the eternal lamp of the Parthenon, a symbol of Christianity.[106]

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[102]Miller, *Latins*, pp.16-17. Data from Lampros, Ιστορια, ii 729, Τησ πολεωσ Αθηνων. See also, Butler, *Story*, p.478. Butler recorded the dove as being silver.

[103]Setton, "Archaeology of Athens," p.258. Data from Sp. Lampros, ed., *The Extant Works of Michael Acominatus Choniates* (in Greek, 2 vols., Athens: 1879-80), *Ep.* 8,3 (Vol.II, p.12).

[104]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, p.145.

[105]Miller, *Latins*, p.12. Data from Lampros, Μιχαηλ Ακομινατου, ii 30, 240,417.

[106]Setton, "Athens-XIIth Century," p.189. Data from *Mich. Accom. Inaugural Address, Ep.25*, (Lampros I, 101-2).

Michael wrote severe complaints in his *Hypomnestikon* to the imperial officials, as well as to any of his friends who were in official positions with power to effect changes. Two of his influential friends were John Belissariotes, the *Great Logothete* in charge of finance, and Demetrius Tornikes, the *Logothete of the Drome*, in charge of the post, internal security and diplomacy.[107] In letters to his influential friends, the archbishop stressed the deporable state of the Athenians and the burden upon them of oppression from the tax officials and from unchecked piracy. Michael wrote very compassionate letters and appealed to his friends for help, pleading for the survival of his beloved Athens and its classical heritage. But even though they were his friends, these imperial officials had lost interest in the provinces and their problems. They were more concerned with their own selfish goals. Choniates complained that 'all they do is to send out tax collectors . . . wave upon wave of them to strip the cities of their remaining wealth.'[108] The lack of concern expressed by the officials of Constantinople caused the Archbishop Michael much grief.

The metropolitan even went so far as to use his address to the central government to complain about the abuses of the imperial officials, and in particular, about the abuses of a certain *praetor* who entered the city of Athens with his army, sometime in 1198, under the pretense of worshiping in the cathedral, but who proceeded to gather provisions and demand contributions from the Athenian people, without receipt of which he refused to leave the city.[109] It was this type of abuse that prompted the archbishop to ask the

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[107]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.149. Data from Michael Choniates, TS II, pp.88-95. Definitions from glossary, pp.462-3.

[108]Angold, *Byzantine Empire*, p.280. Data from *Michael Choniates* ed. by Sp. Lampros II, p.83.

[109]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.150. Data from Michael Choniates, Υπομνηστικον, pp.283-6.

Emperor Alexius III Angelos (1195-1203) to stop all visits of the *praetor* and also of the *mystikos* (imperial secretary), since their presence always resulted in the plundering of Athens. More forcefully, Michael wanted the Emperor to forbid the *kastrenoi* (large land holders) of Athens from absorbing more land from the peasants, the fruits of whose labors were needed for the economic welfare of the city.[110] The peasants, at this time, found it impossible to hold onto land, because of the oppressive taxes, and Michael, in his rhetorical style, said that the peasants were 'blown hither and thither like leaves before the wind'.[111]

To convince his friends of the plight of the city, Michael wrote that he would send his servant personally to confirm and to explain the conditions described in his letters with respect to the oppression of Athenians by tax collectors and the demoralization of a city without the spirit to defend itself. Michael challenged the imperial officials by asking them, "Are you not the common guardians of the lands beneath Roman rule, of Athens with the rest?"[112]

The archbishop expressed additional concerns in his memorial address to the Emperor Alexius III when he called attention to the corruption of the *strategus* of the Hellas theme, and to other abuses such as delaying payment to soldiers from the garrisons and imposing extra tariffs on the Athenian ships.[113] Michael presented convincing arguments on behalf of Athens, asserting that the city was overburdened with tax collectors of various sorts, under imperial

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[110]Brand,*Byzantium*, p.150.

[111]Angold, *Byzantine Empire*, p.278. Data from *Michael Choniates*, ed. Sp. Lampros, II, p.99.

[112]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.151. Data taken from reprint of letter by Michael Choniates, TS II, pp.105-7.

[113]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, p.144. Data from Ellissen, *Michael Akominatos von Chonce*. Gottingen, 1846.

decree, while Thebes, a more prosperous city, was less heavily taxed and its very chrysobull was ignored.[114] Michael must have been distraught when he wrote to an imperial official that:

> the very name of Athens would have perished from the memory of men, had not its continued existence been secured by the valiant deeds of the past and by famous landmarks . . . beyond the envy and destruction of time.[115]

However, his continued complaints did bring a visit to Athens in 1199 from the imperial *logothete*, Basil Kamateros. In any case, Michael makes no subsequent mention of the visit in his writings even though taxes were still collected by the *praetor* at Athens who was assisted by the imperial official, Leon Sgouros.[116]

In spite of these circumstances, Michael was determined to uplift the low level of the people's morality, to improve education, to change the spiritual attitude of the Athenians and reinvigorate dormant ecclesiastical practices.[117] He also devoted energy addressing the economic problems of Athens. For thirty years, the Archbishop Michael worked at improving church lands, built houses and protected the Athenians from harassment by imperial officials attempting to collect excessive taxes. In times of crop failure, Michael obtained relief for the people. Even when crops were good, conditions were such that the production of oil, honey and wine remained meager, and there were frequent famines. Often the Athenian people were literally deprived of their daily bread. These conditions were so difficult in the late twelfth century that it was necessary for the imperial government to give aid either in the form of corn delivery or in

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[114]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.152. Data from Michael Choniates, TS I, pp.312-7.

[115]Setton, "Athens-XIIth Century," p.207. Data from Mich. Acom., *Address to the logothete Basil Kamateros*, 13 (Lampros, I, 316).

[116]Brand, *Byzantium*, pp.152-3. Data from Michael Choniates, TS I, pp.312-7.

[117]Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, p.45. Cheetham quoted the despair of the Archbishop Michael, *O city of Athens, mother of wisdom, to what level of ignorance hast thou shrunk?* n.24, p.45.

cancelling unpaid taxes.[118] Further, Michael protested directly to the Emperor concerning the extortion of money from the city by the governor and concerning the demands of Sgouros for money to support defense against the pirates.[119] Ever since the death of Emperor Manuel in 1180, which was followed by nearly twenty years of anarchy and atrocities in the Empire, Michael had lost all hope for improvement of the Athenian situation.

By 1201, the situation had deteriorated further, as invasions spread through the theme of Peloponnesus. One result was that Leon Sgouros expanded his dominion to Argos and Corinth, which put him in control of the entire Isthmus. This action alarmed Emperor Alexius III, who responded by sending Stryphnos, an official who had the power to end rebellions, to Athens. The hopeful Michael received Stryphnos and his wife with much joy, and pleaded for his support of the Athenian cause. In response, however, Stryphnos only worshipped in the cathedral and did nothing to solve the city's problems.[120] Sgouros remained in power and became bolder. Michael feared for his own life when he heard that Sgouros invited the metropolitan of Corinth to dinner, blinded him, and threw him off the precipice.[121] Nicetas, the Greek historian, relates the same story, writing that:

> Sgouros made peace with Nicholas, the chief shepherd of the Metropolis of Corinth . . . . He invited the man to be his counselor, . . . later, he gouged out his eyes and cast him down from the acropolis.[122]

Despite Michael's efforts, none of his appeals resulted in help from

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[118]Miller, *Latins*, pp.14-15.

[119]Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, p.46.

[120]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.153. Data from Michael Choniates, TS I, pp.324-42.

[121]Ibid. Data from Michael Choniates, TS II, pp.122-31.

[122]Nicetas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. Harry I. Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), (638), p.350.

imperial authorities. In desperation, the archbishop travelled to Constantinople around 1202. This trip also proved unsuccessful, and to the very end of his position, Michael complained about the unequal rate of the land tax and about excessive taxes levied unjustly upon Athens.[123]

Upon return from his journey to Constantinople, Michael found that the situation between Athens and Kolybas, the collector of taxes located at Thebes, had deteriorated. Pirates were on the move again, and preparations for the Fourth Crusade increased the threat to Athens by Leon Sgouros. The policies of Alexius III (1195-1203) gave too much freedom to the magnates, and the Emperor's power in the Hellas theme, specifically the Peloponnesus, eventually collapsed as a result.[124]

The time had come. Leon Sgouros, one of those civil officials, in search of a principality of his own, made his first offensive Athens since the city was left unfortified. Nicetas, the historian, indicates that Sgouros attacked Athens by ship, while his army simultaneously approached by land, hoping to force the city to surrender.[125] Nicetas relates his own pride over the courage of his brother, the Archbishop Michael. He writes of Michael, "yes my very own; I take pride in our consanguinity,"[126] It was Michael who confronted Sgouros, tried to stop him, and failed. After this defeat, the archbishop took drastic action and gathered his people, led them to refuge in the Acropolis where they remained until Leon Sgouros left the city. Thus, Athens was saved from total destruction. Nicetas states in his writings how disturbed he was that these Greek archons

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[123]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.153. Data from Michael Choniates, TS II, pp.122-31.

[124]Ibid.

[125]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (605), p.332.

[126]Ibid.

turned against their own country to satisfy their self-interest. Nicetas consequently blamed renegade archons for the misfortunes of the Empire. Nicetas could not understand:

> what cause did he (Sgouros) have against the Athenians that he should make war upon Attica? The excuse for leading an army against his neighbors, the Argives, was that they shared the same borders, . . . But the Athenians and he, so far removed geographically, had no conflict of interests.[127]

Throughout his writings, Nicetas strongly denounces the Emperors of the Comnenus family because "they were the utter ruin of their country . . . they were the most inept, unfit, and stupid of men."[128] But the fact that his own people did not join forces to defend the Empire weighed heavily on Nicetas' heart. As he recorded the history of Athens' struggles, Nicetas reprimanded himself: "O wretched author that I am, to be the keeper of such evils and now to grace with the written word the misfortunes of my family and countrymen!"[129]

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[127]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (606), 332.

[128]Ibid., (529), 290.

[129]Ibid., (635), 347.

Chapter 3
Byzantine Athens and the Latin Emperors

In the early thirteenth century, Byzantine Athens faced a threat from the West as the Fourth Crusade formed. On this Crusade, the leaders were not kings or great lords but feudal lords of a lower rank. The two highest ranking leaders were Count Baldwin of Flanders and the Marquis Boniface of Montferrat. Financial support was supplied by prominent Venetians. In his work on *Mediaeval Greece*, Cheetham states that the Doge Dandolo's motive in underwriting the Crusade was to secure Venetian supremacy in commercial trade on a permanent basis.[1]

Previous Crusades did not affect Athens, since their religious missions had been directed to the Holy Land. Because of unusual circumstances and events, the Fourth Crusade was diverted to Constantinople. Even Alexius III was surprised by the Crusaders camped at Scutari and to learn that they had confronted Byzantine forces. Nicetas wrote about this encounter of the Crusaders with the Byzantine army, and the seizure of their camp, taking horses, tents, and other booty.[2] Despite negotiations, including, as Robert of Clari indicates in his writings, the offering of treasure to the Crusaders by the emperor,[3] Alexius III could not convince them to proceed to the Holy Land. The Crusaders insisted on recovering the throne for the young Prince Alexius. A leading Crusader, Villehardouin, recorded in his chronicle, that disagreeable

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[1]Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, p.49.

[2]Brand, *Byzantium*,p.235. Also see Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, p.717.

[3]Robert of Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, trans. Edgar H. McNeal, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), p.67.

terms were offered by the Crusaders to Constantinople, terms that were not acceptable in any way to the Byzantine people, including such proposals as "to place the whole of this Empire under the jurisdiction of Rome".[4]

Eventually, several armed clashes took place, and the Crusaders, with destiny working favorably on their side, were able to sail their ships into the Golden Horn, once the heavy chains that barred its entrance were broken.[5] With the ships safe in the harbor, battles continued. Alexius III fled the capital, and the people recalled Isaac as emperor, in spite of his blindness. The Crusaders succeeded, however, in crowning Prince Alexius as co-emperor, and as Alexius IV, he accepted the pope's supremacy and sent word to Pope Innocent III of this agreement. Meanwhile, in order to secure his position and to raise money by which he could pay the Crusaders, Alexius IV asked them to stay another year.[6] The instability resulting from this power struggle weakened the Empire. And the turmoil in which the imperial government found itself hastened its decline, even as the thematic rulers threatened the unity of the Empire.

Events in Constantinople affected the Hellas theme in general, and Athens in particular. During the turmoil, Leon Sgouros saw his opportunity to expand his domain, since the imperial government could not possibly interfere. Therefore, Sgouros, claiming that he was seeking an escaped refugee, marched on Athens. It was mentioned above that the Archbishop Michael tried unsucessfully to convince Leon to reconsider his actions. Although Sgouros was

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[4]Geoffrey de Villehardouin, *Chronicle of the Crusade*, trans. M. R. B. Shaw (New York: Penguin, 1986), p.75.

[5]Ibid., 67. See also Robert of Clari, *Conquest*, p.69.

[6]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.244.

unsuccessful in his siege on the city, he did set fire to parts of Athens and took what booty he could. Nicetas wrote, "Sgouros despaired: he vented his wrath against the city. . . . He put the houses to the torch and carried off those animals suitable for the yoke and as food."[7]

Modern archaeological evidence makes clear the destuction wreaked on the city by Sgouros. Excavations of the northwest section of the Acropolis reveal buildings that were reconstructed in the twelfth century, and their destruction dates from the time of Leon Sgouros' attack in 1203.[8] One building discovered by archaeologists in the Agora had many rooms that were built at different times, but that had been expanded to "one hundred and fifty seven feet . . . by over ninety-eight feet" at its final construction, sometime in the twelfth century. This dating is supported by the coins found under the building's floor and belonging to the Emperor Manuel I (1143-80).[9] Since the building appears to have been abandoned early in the thirteenth century, the evidence can be linked because of its location with the destruction left behind by Leon Sgouros as he departed Athens, burning the extreme edges of the city.[10] After leaving Athens, Sgouros continued to Thebes, which he easily took. He proceeded to annex a portion of Thessaly as well.

The expansion of Sgouros' domain complicated matters in the Empire. The imperial government had been forewarned of potential problems by the Archbishop Michael when he asked, "What revenue from Athens is there from

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[7]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (608), p.333.

[8]Setton, "Archaeology of Athens," p.242.

[9]Ibid., 246.

[10]Ibid., 247.

the praetor? Obviously none whatever!"[11] If there had been no revenue before, certainly there would be none in the future, as it was the *praetor* who collected taxes, and the Athenian *praetor* was assisted by the archon, Leon Sgouros. This problem had further implications for Athens, since the tax official, located in Thebes (which was under the control of Sgouros), would increase the tax burden on the Athenians. Still there would be no assurance that the Emperor would receive any of the revenue. Thus, the problems of Alexius IV were compounded, because he needed to raise money in order to pay the Crusaders what he promised them. Alexius IV at first tried to raise the money he required by resorting to such extreme measures as taking the treasures of the churches and confiscating capital from wealthy citizens.[12] Tensions resulted from his extractive approach to raising money for these payments, and annoyance developed among the looting by the Crusaders and over Alexius IV's continuing friendship with them. Several confrontations followed, and soon Alexius IV was persuaded by his Byzantine officials to turn against the Crusaders. This turn of events led to Alexius IV's murder, Isaac's death and the take-over of the imperial throne by Mourtzouphlos, who became Alexius V.[13] Robert of Clari wrote that when the Crusaders heard of the murder of Alexius IV by a missile that landed in their camp, the Crusaders decided to avenge the Emperor's death and prepared to attack Constantinople.[14]

In the following confrontation, fate played an important role, as the Crusaders stormed the towers of Constantinople from their ships, quickly

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[11]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.152. Data from Michael Choniates, TS II, pp.105-7.

[12]Ibid., 247.

[13]Villehardouin, *Chronicle*, p.84.

[14]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.252.

secured them, and gained entrance, which resulted in the fall of the city.[15] The the Crusaders overtook the capital and found that the Emperor and his party had fled; only the people of Constantinople remained. In addition, we learn from Robert of Clari that the citizenry had crowned Theodore Lascaris as emperor, after which he fled to Nicaea.[16] The killings and plundering that followed the fall of Constantinople debased the men and women of the city, as well as its institutions. Nicholos Mesarites, metropolitan of Ephesus and an eyewitness to these events, gives a vivid account of the horrors of these events, in which, as he says, "indecency was perpetrated . . . thus the ill-doers and mischief makers abused nature itself."[17] Nicetas also relates a very moving account of the plunder, describing his own personal tragedy. He summarizes:

> In other words, the Western nations spared neither the living nor the dead, but beginning with God and his servants, they displayed complete indifference and irreverence to all.[18]

The defeat of Constantinople was a devastating shock to the Athenians; the walls of the city had never failed before, despite the many battles it had endured. Athens, had experienced ten centuries of the Byzantine rule. It was now to be under the jurisdiction of the Latin emperors from the Roman West. The change of rulers meant a new political philosophy and a change in the ecclesiastical authority. This change also introduced a different culture and social behavior within the economic framework of feudalism.

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[15]Robert of Clari, *Conquest*, p.95. The author identified the ship as *Paradisus*, that of Bishop of Soissons. See Villehardouin, *Chronicle*, p.90. See also *Chronicle of Novgorod, 1016-1471*, trans. from the Russian by R. Mitchell and N. Forbes, Phd.(London: Gray's Inn, W.C., 1941), p.46.

[16]Ibid., 100. See Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, n.2, p.428. The coronation took place in 1208 but Lascaris was recognized as the ruler since 1204.

[17]Brand, *Byzantium*, p.269. Selected quote from reprint. Data from Nikolaos Mesarites, Επιταφιοσ,46-47. See also Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (586-92), pp.322-6.

[18]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (648), p.357.

Since the fourth century, the fate of Constantinople had directly affected that of Athens and it was no different now. After the capture of the capital and the division of the booty, the Latins formed a committee to elect the first Latin Emperor. The expected and most capable candidate was the host of the Crusade, Boniface of Montferrat. Setton writes that Boniface did not have the support he needed, and in fact, Boniface could not name six Crusaders who supported him.[19] The Venetians, who were against the election of such a strong leader, took the situation into their own hands by the selection of Count Baldwin of Flanders as the first Latin Emperor, through unanimous agreement at the hour of midnight, on May 9, 1204.[20] One underlying factor contributing to the Venetian opposition to the election of Boniface as emperor, was the close relationship of thirty years standing between the families of Montferrat and Genoa, the latter being a major urban competitor of Venice.[21] Even Nicetas said that Dandolo, the Venetian leader, "wanted the empire to be administered by someone who would be complaisant in his ways, and not too ambitions in his determination to rule."[22] Further, Dandolo knew that Baldwin:

> came from lower France, and that the borders of France and Venice were . . . far removed from one another. . . . Baldwin, moreover, accorded Dandolo absolute deference and behaved towards him as towards a father. . . . Baldwin was not yet thirty two years old.[23]

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[19]Kenneth M. Setton et al., eds., *A History of the Crusades*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), 2:189.

[20]Ibid. See Villehardouin, *Chronicle*, p.96. See also, Robert of Clari, *Conquest*, p. 114. Robert said they agreed to have the clergy join the Venetians as electors.

[21]Day, *Genoa's Response*, p.64. See Brand, *Byzantium*, p.165. Also, Setton, *Crusades*, 2:189.

[22]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (596), p.328.

[23]Ibid., (597).

Nicetas summed up the situation well when he asserted of the election that "it was common knowledge that Dandolo had manipulated the outcome through fraud and deceit."[24]

As the new Latin Emperor, Baldwin I began to distribute the land according to a division plan, which had been formulated jointly prior to the Crusade in March 1204, by the Venetians and the Crusaders. The agreement provided for jurisdiction of the elected emperor over one quarter of the Empire, with dominion over the rest to be divided between the Venetians and the Crusaders. Thus, the Byzantine Empire was divided among the participants in the conquest, and each received his share of the Empire, as a reward. Each lord swore fidelity to the emperor, in the feudal tradition. The land surrounding the capital, as well as a part of Constantinople, became the territory of the emperor. The land that belonged to the emperor constituted the new Latin Empire of Romania.

At the same time, the barons assigned Asia Minor and the Morea to Boniface, who refused to accept the territory of Asia Minor and demanded Thessalonica in its place. Villehardouin wrote that Boniface based his request for Thessalonica on the fact that the kingdom "lay near the territory of the King of Hungary, whose sister he had married."[25] Indeed, the marriage to Margaret, who was also the widow of the Emperor Isaac, took place the day before Baldwin's coronation.[26] Nicetas, also wrote about:

> Marquis Boniface . . . bringing with him Maria the Hungarian, who had been married to Isaakios Angelos and who, after the latter's death and the fall of

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[24]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (596), p.328.

[25]Villehardouin, *Chronicle*, p.97.

[26]Ibid., 96.

the city, became Boniface's wife according to the law.[27]

Passages in the letters of Innocent III confirm the marriage, and indicate that Margaret gave up the Greek Church and accepted the Latin rite upon her marriage to Boniface.[28]

The dispute over Asia Minor and Thessalonica was settled by arbitration. Boniface received the Kingdom of Thessalonica. Once Baldwin agreed to the exchange of territories, Boniface offered to be his vassal, swearing allegiance to him. By accepting Boniface's allegiance, Baldwin changed the status of Boniface to that of a feudatory. Venice received the opportunity to purchase the desirable island of Crete from Boniface. Now, the Venetians, who had built a successful commercial trade, were interested in maintaining the status they had achieved prior to the conquest. Thus, the islands and important harbors were granted to them. Because the Venetians came from the independent Republic of Venice, and since governance there was not feudal in nature, they refused to swear loyalty to the emperor. In the end, they were exempted.

With the Venetian sovereignty dispute settled, the Emperor Baldwin in October 1204 distributed the assigned lands or *fiefs*, officially setting into motion the feudal system of the West. The new nobility proceeded to the provinces to stake claims to their territories, and each lord took dominion over his own principality. These principalities were distinct from one another governmentally, except where general feudal rules applied. In Greece proper, the Kingdom of Thessalonica, the Duchy of Athens, the Prince of Achaia and others co-existed amicably. These varied and independent principalities were superimposed over the political structure of the Byzantine themes. Under

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[27]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (598), p.329.

[28]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, p.62. Data from *Letters Innocent III*, viii,134.

Byzantine authority, the themes, which had been led by a *stratigus*, were politically responsible to the emperor. The system of feudalism on the other hand, provided for division of land into *fiefs*, and the vassals of these *fiefs* gave political allegiance to their lords and not to the emperor. Although the emperor had official sovereignty over all the lords, he was in actuality only the first prince among his peers, and he ruled with the help and advice of his high officials and nobles. The nobles were also part of the court system as well as part of the administrative system.

The Byzantine Empire had in some respects already absorbed the feudal system of the West prior to the Latin conquest. *Fiefs* existed as *pronoia* (land grants), which differed from western *feudum* only in that they could not be inherited and could not be applied to subinfeudation.[29] Early evidence of this Byzantine feudalism is provided by mention of a grant of *pronoia* given in 1059 to the new Patriarch Leichoudes, who "had required a great reputation in his administration of all affairs [of the government] and in the *pronoia* of the Mangana."[30] Thus, the system of *pronoia* was not extremely different from the feudalism of the Crusaders. Boniface in fact referred to the *pronoia* in the environ of Thessalonica, which had been given to his family by the Emperor Manuel Comnenus (1143-80), as his *feudum*, thereby equating these two forms of land tenure. Eventually, the *pronoia* became known as *fief* and the *pronoetes* were called *kavallarios* (knight).[31]

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[29]Setton, *Crusades*, 2:192. Προνια meant to take care of the land given to you as a grant and the land belonged to you as long as it remained in your possession. (The explanation is mine). See Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, p.371.

[30]*Georgius Credrenus Ioannis Scylitzae ope.*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn,1839), 2, 644-5, trans. Deno J. Geanakoplos in *Byzantium*, p.69.

[31]Setton, "Land Tenure and Agrarian Taxation," p.258. Data from Miklosich and Muller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi*, IV, 81 (year 1251), et alibi. I transliterated the word knight καβαλλαριοσ.

The actual conquest of the Byzantine Empire by the western armies began at the end of 1204. Boniface of Montferrat, accompanied by his knights, including his stepson Manuel, marched southwards in his campaigns from 1204-5. He secured claims, covering western Thrace and Macedonia. As Setton points out, Boniface moved into Greece from Thessalonica, and there occupied Thessaly, Euboea, Corinth, Thebes and Athens.[32] Nicetas wrote sorrowfully about the first encounter between the marquis and Leon Sgouros in the low land of Thessaly, at the famous Thermopylae pass. Even so, there was no battle, as the people quickly submitted to Boniface. From Thermopylae, the marquis proceeded to Boeotia where the people of Thebes received him enthusiastically. Nicetas descibed the reception as seeming "as though he were returning home after a long absence."[33] Finally, Boniface reached Athens and there fortified the acropolis. The metropolitan of Athens approached the marquis, as he had Sgouros during that earlier invasion, but Michael surrendered to Boniface without confrontation. According to Nicetas, "he judged that this was not the time to offer resistance, inasmuch as the queen of cities [Constantinople] had fallen."[34] Nicetas goes on to relate the quick submittal of his people to the Latins with the takeover of Euboea, Corinth and Argos. Nicetas lamented:

> But what can I say? The barbarians have outdistanced my narration, flying faster than the quill of my history. . . . Despoiling Thebes, [and] subduing Athens, . . . they proceeded on their way.[35]

Meanwhile, the neighboring principality of Morea was conquered by Geoffrey of Villehardouin and William of Champlitte. The *Chronicle of Morea*

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[32]Setton, *Crusades*, 2:202.

[33]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (609), p.334.

[34]Ibid. My insertion in brackets.

[35]Ibid., (610). My insertion in brackets

clearly stated that these two friends were able to take the whole peninsula without much difficulty, and to divide quickly the land into twelve *fiefs*, which were further subdivided to include those Greeks who remained within them, the Greeks being allowed to keep their lands and becoming part of the feudal structure.[36] Boniface, also, established a feudal system, as he proceeded to divide his new lands among his knights. Othon de la Roche, who came from a well known Burgundian family,[37] received Athens, in addition to Attica, the Megarid and Boeotia (which included Thebes). Through this request, Boniface expressed his gratitude to Othon, not only for his military service, but also for his ability to settle a dispute involving the Emperor Baldwin.[38]

The territory of Boniface extended to Morea as well. There, he claimed some indirect control, although William of Champlitte was designated Lord of Morea, and the Prince of Achaia (a title received from Pope Innocent III). The territorial claims of Venice were thus occupied. As for the Emperor Baldwin, he led his Crusaders into Asia Minor, where he encountered Greek resistance rallying around Theodore Lascaris. Contributing to this resistance was the fact that Baldwin did not follow the examples of the Franks in Greece, in that he refused to include the Greek nobles in the feudal structure of the Latin Empire.[39]

It was different with Othon de la Roche (1205-1225), who initiated the rule of the Burgundian Dynasty. Othon had been well received in Athens and

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[36]*Chronicle of Morea*, From the Greek, trans. Harold E. Lurier, (New York: Columbia University, 1964), p.8.

[37]Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1976), p.405. Data from F.I. Dunod de Charnage. *Memoires pour servir a l'histoire due comte de Bourgogne*, 1740, pp.102 ff.,109-12.

[38]Miller, *Latins*, p.34.

[39]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.10.

Thebes. Apparently, the people hoped for a favorable change from the oppressive rule of the Byzantine Emperors. In the past, the Athenians had lived in peace and prosperity under Roman rule. Again under Othon, the Athenians were allowed to keep their property, to make their own local laws, and to maintain their own religious institutions. However, the top Athenian aristocracy, of both the secular and the church organizations lost their authority and wealth.

The Archbishop Michael, the protector of the Athenians, could not bear to see the cathedral plundered nor to see his library destroyed after his many years of devoted service to those institutions. Finally, Michael lost his see. Out of office, he travelled to Thessalonica and to Euboea, in hope of easing the situation for his flock. Michael found through his wandering that the conditions were just as severe in the provinces as they were in Athens. As a result, the archbishop was forced to exile on the nearby island of Keos, where he stayed at St. John the Baptist monastery until his death. The bishop of Thebes, and most of the other Greek bishops, fled from their bishoprics as the Latin bishops were selected to fill these vacancies. Record does exist, however, of one Greek bishop who remained at Negroponte: the Bishop Theodore, who submitted to the rites of the Roman tradition and rendered obedience to Pope Innocent III and to the Archbishop Berard of Athens. He refused, even so, to be ordained again, *juxta consuetudinem Latinorum*, which disturbed Berard, but in this case Bishop Theodore received the support and protection of the pope.[40] In spite of his stated allegiance to Rome, Theodore had not completely surrendered his loyalty to the Orthodox Church. He remained in close contact with the Archbishop

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[40]Setton, *Papacy*, p.410. Data from Inn.III, an.XI, ep.179 (*PL* 215, 1492-3).

Michael of Athens during Michael's exile years.[41]

Michael was contend to stay on the island of Keos, where he was close to Athens, which could be seen in the distance as he gazed across the waters. Even when George Bardanes, his good friend and previous student, left him to return to Athens and rejoin his mother and sister,[42] Michael had no desire to leave his island home. The archbishop refused all offers to go to the Greek held territories of Nicaea or Epirus, and he busied himself with writing letters to his friends, who kept him well informed about developments in Athens. When the son of his nephew was killed by Leon Sgouros, Michael composed a comforting letter to that nephew. He wrote:

> It was not enough for us to be tyrannized by foreigners and consigned to the lot of slaves, but this man [Sgouros] allegedly of the same [Greek] people, has added to the great distress we suffer from our injuries.[43]

In consoling his nephew, Michael showed his distress over the actions of a countryman, which were worse than the Latins. Michael continued:

> Compare to him . . . the foreigns appear more civilized and on a whole fairer. For example, no one has fled to such a fellow Greek from the cities enslaved by the Italians.[44]

Michael who had been informed of the fair treatment received by the Greek people at the hands of western conquerors, ended his letter by offering proof: "But indeed the Athenians and Thebans and Chalcidians and those who live along the coast remain at home and have not yet fled their dwellings."[45] In the

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[41]Setton, *Crusades*, 2:252.

[42]Setton, *Papacy*, p.418. Data from Mich. Chon., *Epp.* 132,140, (Lampros, II, 267-8,282).

[43]Michael Choniates, *Michael Akominatou Ta Sozomena*, (II, 169-70), trans. Deno John Geanakoplos, in *Byzantium*, pp.372-3. Letter dated 1208.

[44]Ibid., 373.

[45]Ibid.

very same year, 1208, Leon Sgouros committed suicide by riding his horse over the cliff.[46] No comment on this event was made by Michael. One can only infer that Michael would have been relieved that the Greek people were spared further harm from Sgouros. Yet it took eight years before Michael ventured out from his island and visited Athens again. During that return visit, the archbishop felt uncomfortable and had apprehension about his safety in the city. He remarked humorously that he did not want to be food between Latin teeth.[47]

No other such remarks have been recorded. The archbishop simply chose not to write extensively about what he saw of the Latin treatment of the Greeks. It is possible, that Michael was contended that the conditions were as satisfactory as they had been reported to him as being. Surely, Michael would have written something if he had encountered anything different. In addition, he may have been pleased to see that the local priests still used the Greek rites. In any case, acceptance of Latin church tradition had not been imposed by Innocent III. An attitude of conciliation towards the persistence of Greek rites can be seen in the following excerpt from the writings of Innocent III: "It is proper that we should favor and honor the Greeks in our day who return to the obedience of the Apostolic See, sustaining their customs and rites as much as we are able."[48] Innocent III's intention was to unite the two churches by persuasion and not by force.

At the time of the division of the Empire, the Venetians had the

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[46]Setton, *Papacy*, p.405-6. Data on Sgouros from *Bibl. Apost. Vaticana, Cod. Pal. graecus* 226, fol.122r, lines 22-3: Ινα γαρ μη δουλειον ημαπ ιδη αυτω γε ιππω εαυτον απο τον ακροκορινθον ο Σγουροσ κατεβαλεν, ωσ μνδ οστουν αυτω σωον υπολελειφθαι.

[47]Setton, "Athens-XIIth Century," p.205. Data from Michael Choniates, *Ep.* 165,3 (Lampros,II, 326-27), Τοισ ιταλικοισ...οδουσιν...καταβρωμα.

[48]C.Hefele, *Histoire des conciles*, (Paris, 1872), 8, chap.4, 124, trans. Deno J. Geanakoplos in *Byzantium*, p.215.

responsibility for selecting the Latin patriarch according to the provisions stated in the division agreement. The patriarch was to be the pope's representative in the Empire of Romania, and would have the authority to grant the *pallium* to the archbishops. Pope Innocent was displeased when the Venetians selected Thomas Morosini, a Venetian noble for the post of Latin patriarch of Constantinople. Nicetas, too, disliked the selection of Morosini but for a totally different reason. To Nicetas, Morosini appeared ridiculous. He commented on his appearance:

> his native dress: it was embroidered and woven so as to fit tightly about the body but slack at the waist and wrists; . . . his beard was shaved smoother than if removed by a depilatory.[49]

Perhaps, Pope Innocent III would have been more successful in his policy of church unity if he had had the opportunity to select the Latin patriarch. Although the act of selecting a Latin patriarch without the pope's approval was illegal, Innocent III finally agreed and he proceeded to work for unity. Unfortunately, Morosini did not cooperate with Pope Innocent's attempts to unify the Roman and Greek churches. In fact, Morosini actually hindered unification by forbidding Greek rites in Constantinople. In contrast, Pope Innocent III, who had no desire to use force to implement the Latin rites, used "restraint . . . for political ends. Merely as a question of time - as an affair of a less pressing nature."[50] However, the ban ordered by the Latin patriarch resulted in the abandonment of their post by the Greek bishops. It was no wonder that the Greeks turned for relief from oppression to the ruler of Nicaea, Theodore Lascaris, who had become the new Greek emperor in 1208, after he

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[49]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (623),pp.341-2.

[50]Joseph Gill, "Innocent III and the Greeks: Aggressor or Apostle," *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages*, ed. Derek Baker (Edinburgh: At the University Press, 1973), p.95. Selected data from W. Noiden, reprint of *Das Papstlum und Byzanz*, (Berlin,1903), pp.195-6.

established a Greek patriarch in his capital.[51]

It was expected by the Latin rulers that some of the Greek natives would turn to the Greek despots, but it was unexpected when a group of Latin knights did likewise. Pope Innocent III firmly protested in his letters about some of the knights, *cupiditate caecati*, because of their mercenary behavior in alliance with the forces of the despots of Epirus and Nicaea.[52] The Pope reminded the Latin knights how much hatred existed towards the Latins on behalf of the Greeks, who 'even now they call dogs', but Innocent III had cause for alarm, since the Greek despots were attacking the territories of the Latin emperor, and he reacted by ordering the Patriarch Morosini to excommunicate these knights, *fautores Graecorum*.[53]

With respect to ecclesiastical authority, the Latin Church appointed its own archbishops to the twelve existing Greek metropolitan jurisdictions. Two important sees at that time were Athens and Corinth. In addition, the Greek bishops under the metropolitans, were replaced by Latin suffragans. The entire ecclesiastical hierarchy came under the control of Innocent III, the Latin pope, through the Latin patriarch at Constantinople. In his letters, Pope Innocent III asserted ecclesiastical control by stressing the primacy of his leadership as descending directly from St. Peter. Innocent III claimed thereby supreme authority for the teachings of the Christian Church, and insisted on complete submission from the Greek bishops to this authority, and to his representative in Constantinople.[54]

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[51]Setton, *Crusades*, 2:197.

[52]Setton, *Papacy*, p.406.

[53]Ibid. Data from Inn. III, an.XIII, ep.184, (*PL* 216,353-4), dated 7 December 1210.

[54]Gill, "Innocent III," p.99.

The church had been closely associated with the government since the time of Constantine the Great. Through the concept of universal political and religious unity, the papacy exercised control in government affairs. Even emperors were not excluded from ecclesiastical authority. In fact, Pope Innocent III continued to use the Petrine theory in his goal to reunite the two churches and to establish the Latin Church in the Empire of Romania.

Secure with the establishment of a new Latin Emperor, and a new Latin Patriarch in Constantinople, each of the Latin rulers began to develop their own territory. Othon de la Roche ruled Athens well; his government was stable, he encouraged Frankish emigration among his relatives and friends, and he married a French lady, Isabelle de Ray, in a ceremony that took place in Franche-comte. And he developed within his domain a French culture equal to that of France. The Franks spoke not only French but also Greek, and employed equally the customs of both cultures. However, these two cultures existed independently of each other. The Franks preferred their own culture and thus superimposed it upon the indigenous Greek culture. As for the Greeks, over time they became aware that their culture differed significantly from that of the Franks, and from this insight emerged a cohesive force against the culture of the Franks.[55] The native Athenians lived apart from the splendor that characterized the French court in Athens and Thebes. The buildings discovered by archaeologists in the area of the Hill of Colonus were reconstructed in the early Thirteenth century as housing for Athenians established during the reigns of Othon de la Roche and succeeding Burgundian rulers. This claim gains evidence from the color of the pottery found on the site and from the careless

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[55]Anthony Bryer, "Cultural Relations between East and West in the Twelfth Century," *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages,* ed. Derek Baker (Edinburgh: At the University Press, 1973, p.88.

method of construction, which characterized such complexes until the next destruction in the following century.[56]

Othon continued to look to France for the development of his territory. From France came a nephew, son of his brother, Ponce de Flagery, named, Guy de la Roche, who received a section of Thebes as a *fief*. A French nobleman, Nicolas St. Omer, settled near Thebes, and eventually, his son, Bela, married Othon's niece, Bonne, who was also Guy de la Roche's sister. At her marriage, she received the part of Thebes owned by her Uncle Othon.[57]

The Duchy of Athens was feudally organized, and Othon depended upon his vassalage for support. Othon did not have the usual feudal officials as governmental assistants.[58] Most of the duties usually assigned to these positions were performed by his family and relatives. Othon de la Roche did not include many high ranking nobles in his court, as did for example Prince William of Achaea. One positive effect of this condition is that Othon did not have problems of rebellion and discontent among his lords.

Prior to the occupation of Athens by the Latins, the Athenians had been governed by the officials of the emperor, and by the church hierarchy. Just as the Archbishop Michael lost his see and left Athens, the imperial officials also left their posts many even before the Latins took control. The Greek landowners who stayed on under the Latin rule were included in the feudal system, but in the lesser vassalage of *simple homage*.[59] This status did not provide full vassal privileges, and was subjected to common justice and payment of taxes. The top

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[56]Setton, "Archaeology of Athens," p.254.

[57]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, pp.149-50.

[58]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.19.

[59]Ibid.

officials of the Greek ecclesiastical body were given *fiefs*, as were such groups as the Temples and Hospitalers.[60]

On church matters, Pope Innocent III organized the Latin Church in the empire by keeping the same structure that had existed under the Greek Church, and he instructed the Latins to accept this arrangement.[61] Meanwhile, in Athens, Othon turned the Parthenon into the Latin Cathedral of St. Mary.[62] He chose as the metropolitan of Athens the Archbishop Berard, and this appointment was approved in 1206 by Pope Innocent III, who later in 1208, put the see of Athens under the protection of Rome.[63] Pope Innocent III wrote to the French archbishop to tell him how pleased he was that the famous ancient city of Athens had become part of the Latin see, and he told him to take good care of Athens, and its classical traditions.[64] Innocent III stressed the honor of the responsibilities now placed in the hands of Archbishop Berard, for Athens was known as 'a city of high renown and perfect beauty, a teacher of philosophy and student of the apostolic faith'.[65] Innocent III also selected an archbishop for Thebes, independent from Athens, who he included under his protection.

For his legate, Innocent III selected Cardinal Benedict to establish the ecclesiastical system for the Church in Athens, following the tradition of the Church of Paris as requested by Berard, but the Pope was quick to confirm the

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[60]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.19.

[61]Setton, *Papacy*, p.406. Data from Inn. III, an. XIII, esp.26, (*Pl*,216,223A); Potthast, no.3944 (vol.1,p.341): "... mandamus quod in episcopatibus vestris illis contenti terminis existatis quos Graecos praedecessores vestros constiterit habuisse."

[62]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.15.

[63]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, p.150. Data from *Letters Innocent III*, xi,112,113.

[64]Miller, *Latins*, p.68. Data from *Epistola*, bk xi, letter 711-3, from Biblio Epistolarum Innocenti III, Libre XVI(ed.1682).

[65]Setton, *Papacy*, p.407. Data from Inn. III, an. XI, ep.256 (*PL*, 215, 1559-60).

ancient jurisdiction of the past Greek archbishops even under the new ecclesiastical organization.[66] To meet the needs of the Archbishop Berard, the pope assigned several religious houses, churches and monasteries to the Church of Athens, which provided the church with a means of revenue in the areas of Athens and Negroponte, but most important, the church in Athens retained the ancient privilege of freedom from secular control.[67] Berard served the Church of Athens well, and although Innocent III interceded at times in church affairs, there seems to have been a good relationship between the local church in Athens and the Latin hierarchy.[68]

In practice, the ecclesiastical system did not really work well. Othon de la Roche did not support the interests of the church when they conflicted with his own purpose. For example, Othon imposed taxes on the clergy, and often did not pay his own *tithes* to the Latin church, nor did he demand that the people pay them.[69] Most of the people were under the control of the local Greek *papas* (priest) and adhered to the Greek rites.[70] This matter was addressed by Pope Innocent when he wrote a firm letter, in 1208, to Othon stating that Othon was not to force the *akrostichon* (land tax) upon the churches of Athens, but that the *tithes* must be collected.[71]

Othon was not, however, always rebellious in relation to the papacy, as is indicated by one particular favorable letter of Innocent III. The Pope there

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[66]Miller, *Latins*, p.69.

[67]Ibid. Data from *Epistola*, bk xi, letter 256.

[68]Setton, *Papacy*, p.409. Data from Inn. III, an. XIV, ep.112 (*PL*, 216, 471D). Description sent to the Pope, "compositio ... amicabiliter inita".

[69]Miller, *Latins*, p.69.

[70]Setton, *Papacy*, p.411. Data from Inn. III, an. XVI, ep.98, (*PL*, 216, 898B).

[71]Ibid., 412. Data from Inn. III, an. XI, ep.121, (*PL*, 215, 1435).

refers to him as "his beloved son Othon de la Roche, the lord of Athens," who requested more priests for every *castra sua et villae* (castles and villages of his) that contained at least twelve Latin families, and that these families would be responsible for the maintenance of the priests by the payment of *tithes*, and by additional payment if needed.[72]

In other ecclesiastical affairs, Othon was active as well, founding new monasteries, and changing the old monasteries to conform with the religious orders of the West. One particular example, was the old monastery of Daphni, which was occupied by the Cistercian order (who were associated with the abbey of Bellevaux, and supported over the years by the entire de la Roche family). The Cistercians also built a typical French cloister near Athens. Eventually, the Franciscan friars under the Order of Benedict of Arezzo settled in Athens, after an initial settlement in Thebes. On their own, both Athens and Thebes with their Latin archbishops and fealty to the see of Rome were able to establish several bishoprics independent of Othon's jurisdiction.[73]

Othon's territory of Athens and Thebes was not large, and its location made it easy to defend, nestled as it was between friendly neighboring states who were well fortified against any foes. In addition, Othon was on good terms with the Venetians, who controlled Euboea, and on excellent terms with Geoffrey de Villehardouin of Morea. Othon, in fact, helped Geoffrey in his campaigns against the Greek Despots. Geoffrey laid siege to Corinth beginning in 1205. With added help from Othon, Corinth surrendered to Geoffrey, who

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[72]Setton, *Papacy*, p.413. Data from Inn. III, an. XIII, ep.16 (*PL* 216,216CD). Letter dated 9 March 1210. In one letter written 14 July 1208, Innocent III addressed Othon as duke, "dux Athenarum" but in most of the letters Innocent used "dominus Athenarum".

[73]Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, p.79.

subsequently rewarded Othon with a generous grant as a gesture of gratitude.[74] Othon continued to aid Geoffrey I with his military exploits, and by 1212 their combined forces had defeated the armies of Nauplia and Argos. For his help, Othon received Argos and Nauplia, and also part of the income from Corinth. Thus, he became a liegeman to his friend Geoffrey for all the *fiefs* involved in these bequests. At Argos, they captured the wealth of the Church of Corinth, where Theodore had placed it for safekeeping. Neither Othon nor Geoffrey I considered sharing these spoils with the Latin Church.[75] Pope Innocent III took action as a result, senting a letter to Othon, as he had to Geoffrey as well, to urge him to amend his ways lest he bring harm to his soul.[76] Othon and Geoffrey I were ordered by Pope Innocent to make payment for the captured church property, but both leaders disregarded the order. Pope Innocent III persisted in his demands and ordered the archbishop of Thebes to lead an investigation and correct the situation.[77] As a further step, Innocent III incorporated the Church of Corinth into the protectorate of the fold of St. Peter.[78] Othon ignored these changes, preoccupied as he was with extending his territories north of Thebes and south of Argos. With the enlarged borders of his territory established, Othon maintained friendly relationship with neighboring states, especially with Morea. Harmony between Othon and the states surrounding his territories increased Athenian security from the military advances of the Greek despot of Epirus.

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[74]Setton, *Papacy*, p.36. Data from Marino Sanudo Torsello, *Istoria del regno di Romania*, ed. Hopf, *Chron. greco-romanes*, p.100.

[75]Ibid. Data from Sanudo, *Istoria*, in Hopf, *Chron. greco-romanes*, p.100.

[76]Ibid., 37. Data from Inn. III, an. XV, ep.66, (*PL*, 216, 590). Letter dated 18 May 1212.

[77]Ibid. Data from Inn. III, an. XV, ep.77,(*PL*, 216, 598B).

[78]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*,p.128. Data from *Letters Innocent III*, xv.58,61.

Even though Othon and other lords were successful in the provinces, it was not so with the emperor. Unfortunately, Baldwin I died in battle during the Latin conquest. According to Nicetas, Baldwin was captured, chained and put into prison, but eventually, the Latins so angered Ioannitsa that he took Baldwin out of prison and:

> gave orders that his legs be summarily chopped off at the knees and his arms at the elbows before being cast headlong into a ravine. For three days Baldwin lay as food for the birds before his life ended miserably.[79]

A year later, Baldwin was succeeded as emperor by his brother Henry (1206-16). Nicetas explained that:

> For one year and four months there was no emperor to administer the affairs of state, and they would not consent to the anointing of any of Baldwin's kinsmen until his death had been verified.[80]

Although Baldwin had tolerated the established ways of the Greek people in that he left things the way they were, resistance to the Latin rule grew when the Latins interfered with the practice of Orthodox rites. Most top ranking church officials had fled their posts, and the lower clergy siding with the traditional predilections of the Greek people, refused to give up their religious ways. The Greeks had become frustrated with the Latin cardinal, who offended them by wearing red boots (erethrovafe pedila), a symbol of the Byzantine Emperors. The Greeks of Constantinople sent a representative to plead with Henry concerning the maintenance of Orthodox religious practices. The message delivered by the representative included these comments: 'we have submitted to your power, . . . but not our hearts and soul; . . . we find it

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[79]Nicetas Choniates, *Annals*, (642), p.353.

[80]Ibid.

impossible . . . to abandon our religious rites and practices.'[81] It was this type of people's resistance that encouraged the Athenians to assert their own independence.

To foster peace, Henry I engaged in an alliance with the Greek leaders in the East, and as for the Greek people, he treated them kindly. Henry solved the religious dispute, and reopened the Greek churches. The price for the independence of the Greek churches was payment by the Greek clergy to the Latin barons of the traditional Byzantine land tax.[82] The initiative taken by the Greek people in Constantinople resulted in religious freedom for the Athenians and the empire. The other issue, that of the Latin papal supremacy, lost its importance after Theodore Lascaris established a Greek patriarch in Nicaea in 1208.

In the West, Henry I made an alliance in 1207 with Boniface to marry his daughter, Agnes. In return, Boniface paid homage to Henry, who had given him, as part of the arrangement, Thessolonica as a *fief*. Villehardouin wrote that it was Othon de la Roche who discussed the marriage arrangement with Henry when the Emperor was at Demotika.[83]

Henry I called an assembly in 1209 in Greece at Ravennika. The *Chronicle of Morea* describes how Othon de la Roche, the lord of Athens, and Geoffrey of Villehardouin, from Morea, came to the assembly with much splendor.[84] Because both William de Champlitte and his heir died in 1208,

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[81]Setton, *Papacy*, p.42. Data from George Acropolites, *Chron.*, 17, (Bonn, pp.32-33, ed. Heinsenberg, I, 29-30). Setton used the Greek words ερυθροβαφη πεδιλα. Transliteration is mine.

[82]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.13.

[83]Villehardouin, *Chronicle*, p.146.

[84]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.14.

Henry conferred upon Geoffrey the title of Prince of Achaia. The letters of Innocent III to Geoffrey during this period address him first as *seneschal* (administrator), and, by March 22, 1210, as Prince of Achaia.[85]

It was stated above that Othon de la Roche, received authority over Athens from Boniface as a reward for his military service, and therefore that Othon paid homage to Boniface. Othon also received the title of *Megas Kyrios* (Grand Sire) an old title used by Athenian governors.[86] The conquest of Athens made Othon master of Attica and Boeotia. But with the death of Boniface, and the takeover of his kingdom by the Lombards, Othon lost Thebes. In this case, he was able to retrieve Thebes by paying homage to Henry I for both Athens and Thebes. The Emperor, by accepting Othon's vassalage, returned them to the status of a feudatory of the Empire. Following this meeting, Othon de la Roche established his capital in Thebes, even though he maintained a castle at the Acropolis. Athens and Thebes were destined to share a common fate under the rule of Othon.

At the end of the meeting, Henry I went to Athens with Othon. The Emperor gave prayers of thanks for his success at the Cathedral (Parthenon), repeating what Basil II had done in 1018, and after a two day stay, Henry I left for Negroponte, escorted by Othon.[87] Before Henry I returned to the capital, he made arrangements for another meeting at Ravennika the following year, in May 1210, to solve the various problems with the Latin Church.

When the second meeting took place at Ravennika, Henry asserted the

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[85]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, p.127. Data from *Letters Innocent III*, xiii.6,23; xv.21,22,71.

[86]George Finlay, *History of Greece*, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1877), 4:132. There is a controversy over the title of *Megas Kyrios*. See *Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Harold E. Lurier, n.15, p.114 where he stated that the title is medieval and not classical.

[87]Setton, *Papacy*, p.29. Data from H.de Val., *Hist.*, par.681, ed. Longnon, p.115.

superior rights of the Latin Church and the lords of the Latin Empire. The agreement with regard to those rights was confirmed by Innocent III.[88] Othon de la Roche, as well as the archbishop of Athens, attended the meeting. Those at the meeting promised to return church properties and, in turn, the lords were allocated receipt of the land tax (akrosticha) from the Latin and Greek churches, as assessed according to the rate paid by the Greeks previous to 1204.[89]

Regardless of the agreement formulated at Ravennika, Othon took a stand, along with a number of others, on not allowing further gifts of land to the Latin churches. The lands taken from the Greek churches were to be used for secular development. Pope Innocent III did not approve of this policy, and he voiced this disapproval in a letter written on July 1210, complaining that Othon de la Roche, and other lords, followed a policy, regardless of the harm it would cause them, forbidding 'that anyone . . . should confer any of his possessions upon churches or . . . should make testamentary bequests to churches. . . .'[90] Innocent III ordered an investigation in response to the Ravennika agreement. In spite of an initial verdict of excommunication for Othon, his interpretation of this policy was eventually accepted because he had to meet the pressing needs of his position.[91] Othon made the right decision, since the revenues collected were satisfactory to meet the expenses of his duchy without creating excessive demand on the people.

A secondary problem, was the accusation directed at Othon as well as at Geoffrey of Morea, that Greek priests were treated as serfs. Setton points out

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[88]Setton, *Papacy*, p.39. Data from Inn.III, an.XIII, ep.192, (*PL*, 216,360). Letter dated 21 December 1210.

[89]Ibid., 40. Data from Lampros, *Eggraphia*, pp.15-6; *PL*, 216, 970D-971A.

[90]Ibid., 412. Data from Inn.III, an. XIII, ep.ll0 (*PL*, 216, 302AB).

[91]Finlay, *History of Greece*, 4:136.

that the number of priests increased sharply once the bishops began conferring religious orders on serfs to lift them from the status of serfdom.[92] The churches also refused to support the military needs of the Latin empire. Thus, the Latin rulers seized church properties in retaliation, which led Pope Honorius III (1216-1227) to excommunicate the rulers, including Othon. It had become apparent that the positions and actions taken by Othon to solve his problems only created friction with the Latin Church. Though he was, as a result, threatened excommunication several times, Othon managed to come to terms with the Latin Church. In this particular case, the conclict between Othon and the churches was resolved in 1223, when a compromise was reached whereby the churches received their lands, agreed to pay the annual tax, and accepted a limited number of Greek priests based on the population.[93] Othon received a letter, which clearly indicated the number of Greek priests allowed. Specifically, two priests in a village of seventy families, four priests for one hundred twenty five families, six priests for more than one hundred twenty five families, and also specified, was the amount of the yearly payments to be made by Othon to the Latin churches of Athens, Thebes and others.[94]

With the problems solved, peace and harmony existed. Unfortunately for the people, Henry I died unexpectedly in June 1216 while at Thessalonica. His ten year reign transformed the Latin Empire, producing a more stable political situation. Henry's major accomplishment was to establish a balance of power, between the Latins and the Greeks, throughout the Empire. Henry also

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[92]Setton, *Crusades*, 2:241.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Setton, *Papacy*, pp.48-9. Data from Lampros, *Eggrapha*, p.30; cf *Regesta Hon.III*, II, no.4480, p.159.

displayed impressive religious toleration and reprimanded the ecclesiastical hierarchy for their acts of oppression and their material extravagance. Nicol asserts that Henry's success as a leader is attested to the grief expressed by his Greek subjects at his death because they recognized the difference between his tolerance and understanding and that of his predecessor, Baldwin.[95] Nicol, in addition, suggests that the Greeks could accept Henry as emperor because to them, he was a soldier with honor who treated them more as partners than as subjects, and above all, he allowed them to practice their religion.[96]

The historian, George Acropolites provides evidence that Henry treated the Greek people with the same fairness that he treated the Latins.[97] The esteem which the Greek people bestowed upon Henry I, is clearly conveyed in the chronicles of Henri de Valenciennes. When Henry I made his entry into Thebes, the Greek priests, important Greek citizens and the people of the city gathered to greet him with a loud welcome, repeating the phrase *polla chronea* (many years).[98]

Since Henry left no heirs, Peter de Courtenay, husband of Yolande, Henry's sister, became next in line to be emperor. Enroute to Constantinople, Peter was captured, imprisoned, and killed by Theodore Ducas,[99] but Yolande arrived safely by sea. Although her eldest son, Phillip, had been chosen to be

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[95]D.M. Nicol,"The Fourth Crusade and the Greek and Latin Empires, 1204-61," *Cambridge Medieval History*, 8 vols. (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), 4:301.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Setton, *Papacy*, p.28. Data from Acropolites, *Chron.*, 16 (Bonn, p.31, and ed. Heisenberg, I, 28): "Το δε κοινον πληθοσ {i.e. even the "common people"} ωσ οικειον περιειπε λαον.

[98]Ibid., 29. Data from H. de Val., *Hist.*, pars. 672-79, ed. Longnon, pp.111-14. The transliterated words are mine which differ from the author's for the Greek phrase πολλα χρονια.

[99]Ibid., 44. Data from George Acropolites, *Chron.*, 14 (Bonn, pp.28-9, ed. Aug. Heisenberg, I, (Leipszig,1903), 25-6); Aubrey of Trois-Fontaines, *Chron.*, ad ann. 1217, in *MGH,SS,* XXIII, 906.

the next Latin Emperor, her second son Robert accepted, and became emperor in 1221. Robert did not possess the leadership capacities of a strong emperor.

The following year, 1222, the Greek Despot, Theodore Lascaris, died and was succeeded by his son-in-law, John Dukas Vatatzes. He was a most effective and powerful person. Emperor Robert, who was no match for Vatatzes, lost control of Asia Minor.

With these events occurring in the East, Pope Honorius was greatly concerned over the fate of the empire. He wrote to Othon and Geoffrey appealing for their help. Pope Honorius reminded Othon that the Latin Church had been tolerant of his misdeeds. He went on to state that he would release the papal interdict on Othon's land and rescind the ban of excommunication against Othon for the defense of the Latin Empire.[100] In addition, Pope Honorius helped Othon economically, by allowing the archbishop of Athens to support a reduction in the number of Latin pirates. For those who were willing to give up their ways, the archbishop could forgive these so called *capellecti*.[101]

The next two years saw the downfall of Salonika and of the northern region of Greece, which separated Constantinople from the Latin states in the south. However, the Duchy of Athens and the principality of Morea survived. Othon de la Roche, the Duke of Athens, and Geoffrey I of Morea, fortified their position, and prepared to support each other as they faced a common foe. In 1225, Othon de la Roche, after twenty years of rule, retired to France with his wife and two sons. Surprisingly, Othon chose to leave the Duchy of Athens to his nephew Guy de la Roche. The period of Othon's rule had been one of relative

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[100]Setton, *Papacy*, p.49. Data from Hon. III, an.VIII, epp.43,46 (Lampros, *Eggrapha*, pt.1, docs.15-7, pp.21-3). Letter dated 19 September 1223.

[101]Ibid., 419. Data from Hon. III, an. VIII, ep.61 (*Regesta*, II, no. 4528, p.167): "...piratae,qui Capellecti vulgariter muncupantur." Letter dated 9 October 1223.

peace. He did not have to contend with aggressive nobles, and most of his problems centered around his relationship with the Latin Church.

As the original conquerors died, the rulers that replaced them were younger and more powerful. Morea, in fact, was the leading power, and not Constantinople. The Emperor Robert was weak, and the Latin Empire declined in power after he became a recluse in his palace.[102] Robert died in 1228 while visiting his sister Agnes. His successor was John de Brienne who reigned from 1231-7, and although a hero, de Brienne did not make any significant change to the state of the empire.

The Latin Empire was thus in a state of turmoil, and relied heavily on the principality of Morea and the Duchy of Athens for cohesion and power. Geoffrey II of Morea increased those in vassalage to him to include the rulers of Cephalonia, Naxos and Euboea,[103] which helped Morea to become the most powerful, wealthy Latin state. Geoffrey II generously contributed to the support of the Empire supplying it with a military fleet and needed revenue.[104]

The Duchy of Athens, also became powerful, prospering from the trade in silk products made in Thebes. Guy de la Roche brought wealth to Athens through trade negotiations with Genoese, Venetians, and others competing for trade privileges. The increased trade that resulted from these negotiations brought back to Athens a community of Genoese, and by 1240 Guy had allowed the Genoese to live in Thebes as well. The agreement made between Guy and the Genoese leader, Riccio di S. Donato, spelled out the most favorable terms. Guy de la Roche earnestly welcomed commerce with the Genoese, and gave

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[102]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.17.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid.

complete freedom to them, including the privileges necessary to facilitate trade even to allowing them to maintain their own local civil officials.[105] One of the privileges extended to the Genoese, in both Athens and Thebes, consisted of their own personal quarters designated by Guy. The only trade restriction made by Guy was that the Genoese pay the duty required of others if the Genoese officials made the silk goods for their own use. In addition, in the court system, the Genoese could not rule in any cases that involved murder, robbery or violence towards women.[106] The Genoese, on their part, promised to protect Guy, his possessions and his people in Athens and Thebes.

The Genoese trade agreement proved very successful. Even after the Greeks had taken Constantinople, the silk trade did not decline. Pope Urban IV, writing to the archbishops of Athens, Thebes and Argos in 1262, ordered a supply of silk from the Greeks, to be used for church garments. Urban IV asked specifically for "four pieces of silk cloth, well woven and dyed green, purple, red and white" in each of his letters.[107]

The aged John de Brienne died in 1237, at which time the nineteen year old Baldwin II became emperor. Baldwin II was a product of the East, well-versed in the Greek language and culture. He went immediately to Europe to organize an army and to raise money. Finally, after all arrangements were made, he returned to Constantinople in 1240. Despite the efforts of Baldwin II, the capital declined to near poverty. The Emperor got some relief when his foes

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[105]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, p.149. Data from *Liber iurium Reipublicae Genuensis*, No. DCCLVII.

[106]Setton, *Papacy*, p.420. Data from *Liber iurium reipublicae genuensis*, I (Turin, 1854), doc. DCCLVII, cols. 992-3. Agreement dated 24 December 1240 at Thebes.

[107]Ibid. See fn.87, data from Jean Guiraud, ed., *Les Registres d'Urbain IV (1261-64)*, I, (Paris, 1901), no.67, p.17: "quattuor exameta...bene texta et tinta, viridis, violacei, rubei, bene coccati et albi colorum."

quarreled among themselves; at other times, he allied himself with the Cumans or the Turks, but soon he ran out of money, and Constantinople was defenceless against the Greeks when it was captured in 1261.[108]

The papacy, however, exerted itself in support of Baldwin II, and of the See of Constantinople, which had been reduced to poverty. Pope Gregory IX (1227-41) appealed to the archbishop of Thebes to collect *tithes* from his churches to support the Church of Constantinople. In desperation, he wrote these pitiful words, 'and yet there was no one willing or able to extend a helping hand.'[109] Pope Gregory IX still remembered the recent past of 'frequent attacks upon the devastation of the city of Thebes, which the Greeks have often laid waste.'[110] Other popes also supported Guy de la Roche. Pope Innocent IV (1243-54), for example, wrote to the Latin patriarch in Constantinople advising him to remove the Greek monks who were supplying information to Guy's enemies.[111]

The concern of the papacy for the See of Constantinople and for Guy de la Roche was indeed great. Nevertheless, the papacy did reach out to protect the Athenians when a direct conflict occurred with the Latin clergy. A particular problem involved the custom of the Greeks to give at the time of marriage, "a single hen and a loaf of bread and nothing else," but the Latin clergy of the Athenian church demanded money, thus, Pope Gregory IX (1227-41) ordered the

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[108]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.18.

[109]Setton, *Papacy*, p.66. Data from Greg. IX, an. XV, ep.60, ed. Auvray, *Registres de Gregoire IX*, fasc. 12(1910), no.6035, col.515. Letter dated 29 May 1241.

[110]Ibid., 67. Data from Auvray, *Registres de Gregoire IX*, II, (1907), nos. 2671,3214, cols. 108,421, letters dated 12 July 1235 and 27 June 1236, "...propter frequentes guerrarum impulsus et vastationem civitatis Thebane, que a Grecis sepius est vastata".

[111]Ibid. Data from Inn. IV, an. I, ep.656 (Lampros, *Eggrapha*, pt.1, doc.28, pp.43-44).

archbishop of Athens to take charge, and to execute restitution.[112]

A problem of a different nature arose when Guy de la Roche faced a dispute over the status of Athens in 1254. Prince William II wanted Guy, the *Megas Kyrios* of Athens, to pay him homage. Guy refused, and agreed only to offer him the feudal obligations for Argos and Nauplia. According to the rules, Guy was under no feudal obligations to help William II with his claims against Negroponte. With no agreement possible, battle was declared.

Guy de la Roche based his reply to William II's request on the facts that Othon de la Roche, at the time of Boniface's death, paid homage to the Emperor Henry, and that William de Champlitte did not gain control of Athens during the conquest. The feudal records clearly showed that Othon received Argos and Nauplia as personal free properties, a reward to an ally, who had helped Geoffrey I Villehardouin in his conquest.[113]

The aggressive William II proceeded to lay siege to Negroponte, and when it appeared that William II would not give up, Guy decided to oppose him. The barons, who rallied in support of Guy, were Thomas II, Lord of Salona, the Marquis Pallavicini of Boudonitza, and his son-in-law, Geoffrey of Carytaina.[114] Despite the support of these barons, Guy's forces were defeated in a fierce battle at the narrow mountain pass of *Kakeskala*,[115] and as a result, Guy had to appear in William II's court to be judged by his peers. Prince William may have

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[112]Setton, *Papacy*, p.419. Data from Auvray, *Registres de Gregoire IX*, III (1908), no.4795, cols.3-4, dated 23 March 1239.

[113]Finlay, *History of Greece*, 4:138. Other scholars agree with this interpretation. See Cheethan, *Mediaeval Greece*, p.68. See also, K. M. Setton, "The Latins in Greece and the Aegean," *Cambridge Medieval History*, 8 vols. (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), 4:408.

[114]Miller, *Latins*, p.105. See n.1, data of Muntaner, *Chronicle*, CCIXI who supported the fact that Athens was free of feudal duty.

[115]Ibid. The author used the Greek word Κακησκαλα which means "bad ladder" or "bad step" in describing the narrow and dangerous road. My translation.

won the military battle, but he lost the judicial battle since his own court could not find any infraction of feudal laws. Besides, the court members were not the peers of Guy de la Roche, who was in his own right, not only the *Megas Kyrios* of Athens, but also, of Attica and Boeotia; for Nauplia and Argos, he was merely a liegeman.[116] According to Sanudo, Prince William expected Guy to be punished because the Prince had presented his case in terms of feudal duty tied in with the expenses involved, but the barons, not being his peers, could not judge him within the feudal system.[117] The Prince persisted and appealed to the court of King Louis IX of France, who had an excellent reputation for his judicial fairness.[118] Guy de la Roche agreed, and went to France the following spring to present himself at court, which met at Easter in 1260. King Louis IX knew that neither Guy nor his Uncle Othon ever paid homage directly to the Prince of Morea, therefore, Guy was within his rights. But since Guy de la Roche knew that Boniface had given Morea jointly to William II's father and to Champlitte, Guy should not have attacked his liege lord. Finally, the king judged the whole affair trivial, and asserted that the inconvenience and expense for the trip to Paris had been punishment in itself. In fact, Guy was not only acquitted, but King Louis IX granted his request, and changed his title to Duke of Athens.[119]

By the time Guy de la Roche returned to Athens, he faced important

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[116]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, pp.195-6. Data from Sanudo, *Istoria de regno di Romania*, p.105.

[117]Ibid., 195. Data from Sanudo, *Istoria di Romania*, p.105.

[118]Finlay, *History of Greece*, 4:139.

[119]Ibid. A controversy exists over the Latin word *dux* which was used for the Greek word στρατηγοσ (general). See *Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, n.47, p.174. Lurier stated there is no ancient title of *dux* and no official had this title in Athens. Further, Lurier even doubts that he was invested with this title but he does admit the title was loosely used after Guy returned from France. See also Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, n.1, p.209. Rodd stated that Nicephorus Gregoras traced the origin of the title to the reign of Constantine. The title *dux* was used in place of στρατηγοσ for the heads of themes. The *dux* of the Hellas Theme usually resided in Athens. For complete explanation, see Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, p.368.

developments. First, the Greek *strategus*, Strategopoulus, enroute to Epirus, noticed that the naval ships were not in the harbor of Constantinople. He quickly took advantage of the fortuitous moment and with his force of eight hundred men easily took control of the city.[120] Luckly, Emperor Baldwin managed to escape from Constantinople. Secondly, William II Villehardouin, who had become a prisoner of the Greek Emperor Michael VIII, had been taken to Constantinople, after it was captured in 1261. The Byzantine historian Nicephorus Gregoras recording the details of the Battle of Pelagonia, wrote that the Greeks "attacked and captured the rest, except for a few, and among the captured was Prince William of the Peloponnesus and Achaia".[121]

Guy de la Roche knew that Prince William had been captured, because it was for this reason that he had been asked to return from France to act as the bailie of Achaia. However, Guy did not know, until his return, where William II had been taken. Even though the situation seemed hopeless, Guy began proceedings to ransom Prince William.

Meanwhile, Baldwin II, with the patriarch and the Venetian Podesta arrived safely in Thebes, and were met by Guy. Emperor Baldwin II and his barons, who either survived the Battle of Pelagonia or the prisons of Michael VIII, went with Guy to the Castle of the Kadmeia on the acropolis. Once there, Baldwin II rewarded the barons (with what possession he had left) by bestowing titles of knighthood, and presenting them with relics, and after making these gestures, Baldwin II decided to return to Europe.[122]

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[120]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, p.210.

[121]Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantina historia*, ed. L. Schopen and I. Bekker (Bonn, 1829), 1, 74-75, trans. Deno J. Geanakoplos in *Byzantium*, p.107.

[122]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, p.211.

In desperation, Prince William, who had been held for two years, made concessions to Michael VIII for his freedom and that of his barons. To pay for his release, Prince William II, ceded three important fortifications, Monemvasia, Misithra and Maina, to Michael VIII. As part of the agreement, the Prince had to acknowledge Michael as emperor and to supply hostages as a confirmation of his intentions to honor the terms of release. The Emperor Michael sent Geoffrey of Carytaina to Morea to present their terms to the bailie. Geoffrey arrived in Athens and was met by Guy who was glad to see his son-in-law; together they went to the court of Achaia, which was held at Nikli.[123]

The court consisted mostly of women, which included Princess Anna and the wives of the men who were in prison, and only two barons, Pierre de Vaux and Leonardo da Veruli, the chancellor, were present.[124] Guy, the Duke of Athens, and Geoffrey of Carytaina presented different points of view to the court. The Duke of Athens made his position clear and said, "It is the truth, . . . that I got into difficulties with my lord the Prince because I said that he was requiring me illegally to become his liege man."[125] The Duke, in order to prove his sincerity, continued:

> I say and affirm I will do this: I will enter prison and the Prince, let him come out; or if it is a question of ransoming . . . I will pledge my land for *denarii*, and thus let the ransom of my liege lord be paid.[126]

Guy objected to the plan on the grounds that it would disrupt Frankish control

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[123]Rodd, *Princes of Achaia*, p.213.

[124]Ibid.

[125]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.200.

[126]Ibid., 201.

of Greece, however, the transfer was completed.[127] The terms were accepted by the members of the court because they agreed with Geoffrey, who,in his reply to Guy, said emotionally:

> All that the great lord says here, we said there in our prison, . . . but . . . it would be a sin . . . not for any man in this world, . . . will I leave my lord in prison to die. I will fulfill the command he gave me to surrender his castles that he may be released from his torment.[128]

The court selected two women as hostages, and sent them to Constantinople. When the women arrived, William II gave homage to Michael, who verified Prince William's title of *grand seneschal*. After the ceremony, an unusual action took place. Prince William became the godfather to a child of the Emperor. The historian George Pachymeres wrote:

> Moreover, Michael contracted with him such a close bond that he had him hold one of his children at the baptismal font. After that, they bound each other reciprocally by execrable oaths . . . . Then the emperor . . . honored him with the office of grand domestic.[129]

Finally, William II and his barons were free to leave. When William II returned, the Duke of Athens relinquished his bailieship to him.

William II immediately set out to solve his problems with Euboea, but this time, everyone benefited. As a result, the solution to the problems contributed to the security of Athens, but Guy de la Roche did not survive to see all the restoration work of Prince William. After thirty nine years of rule, Guy de la Roche died in 1263. John, his son, became the next Duke of Athens.

John de la Roche took his position seriously, and served the Duchy of Athens very well. He supplied help to John Dukas in a battle against the

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[127]Finlay, *History of Greece*, 4:140. See Nicol, "Fourth Crusade," *Cambridge Medieval History*, 4:402. Nicol stated that the lonesomeness of the women, who represented the wives or widows of the men who were missing at the meeting, prevailed over the dictates of military prudence.

[128]*Chronicle of Morea*, trans. Lurier, p.201.

[129]George Pachymeres, *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1835), 1, 86-88, trans. Deno J. Geanakoplos in *Byzantium*, p.123.

Byzantine army and won. The Duke joined the Prince of Thessaly to fight the Greek Emperor, but this time, the Franks were defeated. John, as a prisoner of Michael VIII, was treated well. The emperor released John without demanding a ransom payment and allowed him to return to Athens.[130] John de la Roche (1263-1280) was the first Duke of Athens to rule under the Greek Emperor Michael VIII.

Byzantine Athens survived its significant transformation under the Latin Emperors, and continued to exist long after the culture of the Franks had disappeared.

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[130]Finlay, *History of Greece*, 4:141. The information given was not clear, perhaps, Finlay meant no territorial ransom. See Setton "Latins in Greece and the Aegean," *Cambridge Medieval History*, 4:410. Setton stated he was freed after paying 30,000 *solidi*. See also Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, p.104. Cheetham stated that there was a ransom payment but no demands of territory.

Chapter 4
Conclusion

Athens from its beginnings, developed as the center of a universal empire. The Emperor Justinian (527-65) centralized power in Constantinople, and Athenians were directly responsible to the Emperor. The system of themes with its imperial officials was the connecting link. Justinian I, in his dual role as the ruler of the Church, and as Emperor, combined the concept of the universal church with that of the universal empire. It was this development that gave the Byzantine Empire its unique characteristics.

Athens, as part of the system of themes, received special consideration from the emperors because of its classical traditions. The Emperor Julian had no cause to worry that the future emperors would forsake Athens. Ongoing interactions between Athens and the emperors are well documented in contemporary sources. At the time of the impact of Christianity, the cultural heritage of Athens had not been rejected within the Empire. Classical learning was merely evaluated and adapted to the new Christian teachings. Thus, combining the principles of a universal empire and a universal church, Athens participated in the cultural evolution of the Empire and developed following the pattern of other cities, in spite of its reduction from capital city to provincial town and its subordination to Constantinople. At the end of the twelfth century, Athens was still intact. It remained a part of the Byzantine Empire, and had survived the hardships of raids, famine, plagues, and pirates. In the twelfth century however, the city did have internal problems. During this period, Athenians suffered the burden of high taxes, were oppressed by the oppressive demands of tax farmers, and faced the greed of large landowners seeking more land and more power. The conditions that prevailed in Constantinople, and the

involvement of the Emperor with the Fourth Crusade was discussed in detail above. When the capital was defeated by the Crusaders, the Athenians faced a moral crisis. They were separated from the protection of the Emperor and were left to face the conquerors on their own.

Following the conquest, the Athenians were fortunate to have Othon de la Roche as their ruler. His policies and practices were not oppressive. Under Frankish rule, a transformation did, however, occur in the political structure of Greece. The themes no longer existed as political entities, and the territory under Othon became a duchy independent from the Latin Empire. The agricultural lands of the duchy were distributed according to the western feudal principles. Under this system, the only connection the Athenians had with the Latin Emperor was through the feudal lords. When the Byzantine Emperors returned to power in 1261, the concept of the universal empire had lost its original power and never emerged with its original force again.

The lords of Athens, who came into being in 1205 with the formation of the House of de la Roche, survived until well after the last Latin Emperor had lost Constantinople to the Greek Emperor Michael VIII. While Athens was under the rule of the Dukes of de la Roche, it possessed a society which lived in luxury and which had finer amenities than other European cities. The Dukes and their courts spoke the best French and practiced the finest French culture.[1]

During the de la Roche reign, Athens had a large population and contained much wealth. The countryside was filled with villages and productive farm lands served by aqueducts. Athens had a lucrative trade, especially in silk which Thebes produced. The standard of high living amid economic prosperity

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[1]Finlay, *History of Greece*, 4:143. Finlay received his information on the court life of Athens from the writings of the Spaniard, Ramon Muntaner.

extended to the masses as well. Athens included at this time a large class of people who lived in comfort, and the growth of this class is evidenced by a contemporary decrease in the number of serfs and slaves.[2] From the beginning of his rule, Othon de la Roche had supported the individual privileges of his Greek subjects, and decreased their financial burdens. Othon understood the value of having his Greek subjects as allies, not only to increase his security but also to defend the Duchy of Athens from external foes. As recompense for the loyalty of the Athenians, Othon paid attention to the complaints of the masses concerning the drawbacks of the feudal system, and took the initiative to modify them. As a result, the Greek subjects were able to increase their productivity and their wealth, in spite of the payment of taxes to the Duke, who lived in splendor and was able to afford mercenaries in addition to his knights. This common prosperity led to a general understanding that in order for a ruler such as Othon to protect the masses, it was better to have the people hold lands themselves and pay taxes directly to the Duke rather than hold the people in fealty to military *fiefs*. Despite the power struggle between the Frankish barons, who craved land insatiably, and the Greek people, who tenaciously held on to their properties, this discontent never surfaced with respect to the overall justice of the Athenian property system under Othon: the pressure of public opinion inhibited such a development.[3] The economic well-being of Athens and Thebes, as well as the fair treatment of Athenian citizens by Othon's rule, promoted a good relationship between the Dukes of de la Roche and the Greek people.

Even the Archbishop Michael, after travelling to Athens, observed how

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[2]Finlay, *History of Greece*, 4:144.

[3]Ibid., 145.

well the Greeks faired under the rule of Othon. Some of the Greeks who had fled Athens during the invasion, returned and they too were treated well. One of these Greeks who returned was the Archbishop Michael's good friend Demetrios Makrembolites, who kept Michael supplied with food and wine from Athens during his exile.[4] The Archbishop Michael was in fact, so convinced of the tolerable situation of the Greeks that when he was consulted by the Abbot of Kaisariani, Michael told him to accept the authority of the Franks and remain in Kaisariani so that the monastery could stay in Greek control.[5]

The serfs who worked the fields looked to the Dukes for protection and for an easier life than that which they had under the Greek Emperors. The Dukes of Athens had modified the feudal system so that a serf could pay a fixed rent in kind for his land. This modification helped the decline of rural and domestic slavery in Athens under Frankish rule.

The Dukes of Athens and their courts were known throughout Europe for their wealth, for their power and influence among the Latin Empire, as well as for their French culture. Their palace was built on the Acropolis, over the very columns of the Propylaea,[6] and the additional construction of a tower, along side various works of sculpture exemplified the grandeur of the Duke of Athens' court. The grand reputation of the Duke is attested to in the literature of the day. While it can not be claimed that Athens was a center of learning during the Latin domination, there nevertheless existed a thread of intellectual activity, which is evident in the survival of customs, folklore, and *paralogai*

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[4]Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, p.81.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Finlay, *History of Greece*, 4:170.

(ballads) that embodied a continuity with classical Athens.[7] The historian Vacalopoulos points out that even the Archbishop Michael Choniates, disillusioned with the Athenians of his day, maintained that they were cultural descendents of the Ancient Greeks.[8]

Yet, it was the continuity of ancient civilization with the Greek present, which engendered the awareness of Greek cultural identity that manifested itself at the time of the Fourth Crusade and during the period of the Latin Emperors. The Fourth Crusade acted as the catalyst in the development of resistance to the Latins and to subsequent conquerors. In addition, it reinforced among the Greeks an awareness of their link to the ancient world and to the traditions of Hellenism. Another source of cultural cohesion came from those Greeks who held on to their Orthodox faith. Latin domination resulted in a revival of Greek oral traditions and at the same time stimulated the development of demotic language, which was imposed by the Greek populace on the Latin courts, much to the opposition of the Latin rulers.[9]

The concept of a universal church declined more rapidly than did the concept of the universal empire, as a result of the many evolutionary differences between the Byzantine and Roman Churches. The conquest, which brought these differences to the surface, combined with the conflict over the use of Greek or Latin within the church created a unified resistance to Latin religious domination among Athenians. Although the papacy maintained the ecclesiastical structure established by the Greeks, the Latin clergy replaced the

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[7]A. E. Vacalopoulos, *Origins of the Greek Nation* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1970), p.21.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., 45.

Greek hierarchy.

Thus, in ecclesiastical matters at least, the Orthodox Church was able to sustain itself only through compromises. The Latin ritual did not, however, replace that of the Orthodox Church, due to popular resistance. Because of the strength of that resistance, the Latin rulers relented and the Greek clergy continued to use the Orthodox ritual. The religious issues confronting the Greeks resulted not only from the differences of doctrine and ritual with the Latins, but also from the rivalry between Constantinople and Rome, the two leading sees. The pope and patriarch of these sees could not agree on common ground around which to base negotiations about their differences. The Greek and Latin language barrier made it difficult for the common people to understand the Latin ritual, and the Greek rite of using leavened bread, coupled with the problem of the *filoque* phrase amplified the differences in the liturgy of the two rites. Add to this disagreement, the pressing problem of the pope's supremacy: though the Greek East willingly accepted the idea of the primacy of the Roman See as descended from St. Peter, it did not recognize the supreme authority of the pope. The people of the Latin West were not concerned with theology. They left it to the theologians. In contrast, the Greeks of the East were interested in theology of their church, in the same manner that the classical Athenians made involvement with pagan philosophy part of daily life.[10]

In sum, medieval Athens survived the Latin domination in an environment characterized by peace and prosperity, just as it had under the rule of the Roman Empire. The Greek people were incorporated into the Latin feudal system, and were treated fairly by the Latin Emperors, following the

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[10]Cheetham, *Mediaeval Greece*, p.53.

early example of Emperor Henry. As a result of the political wisdom of the House of de la Roche, the people of Byzantine Athens maintained their Greek language, their culture, and more importantly, their Orthodox faith. It was the determination and the resiliency of the Athenian Greeks that provided the impetus for their survival under the changing conditions of the Byzantine Empire.

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Appendix A
Maps

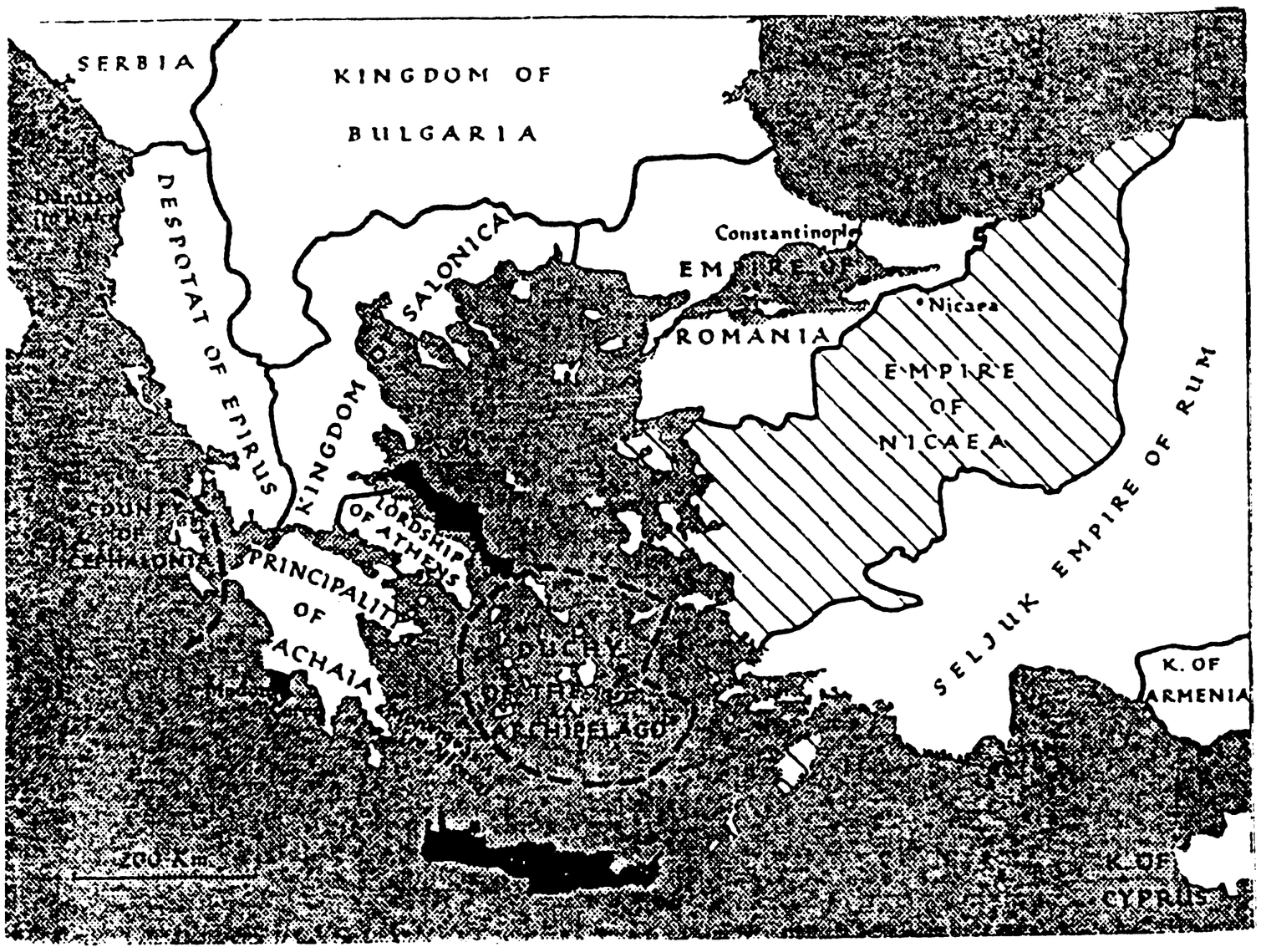

Figure A-1: Greece in 1214.*

*Permission granted for reprint of map taken from W.A. Heurtley, *A Short History of Greece*, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1965, p.54.

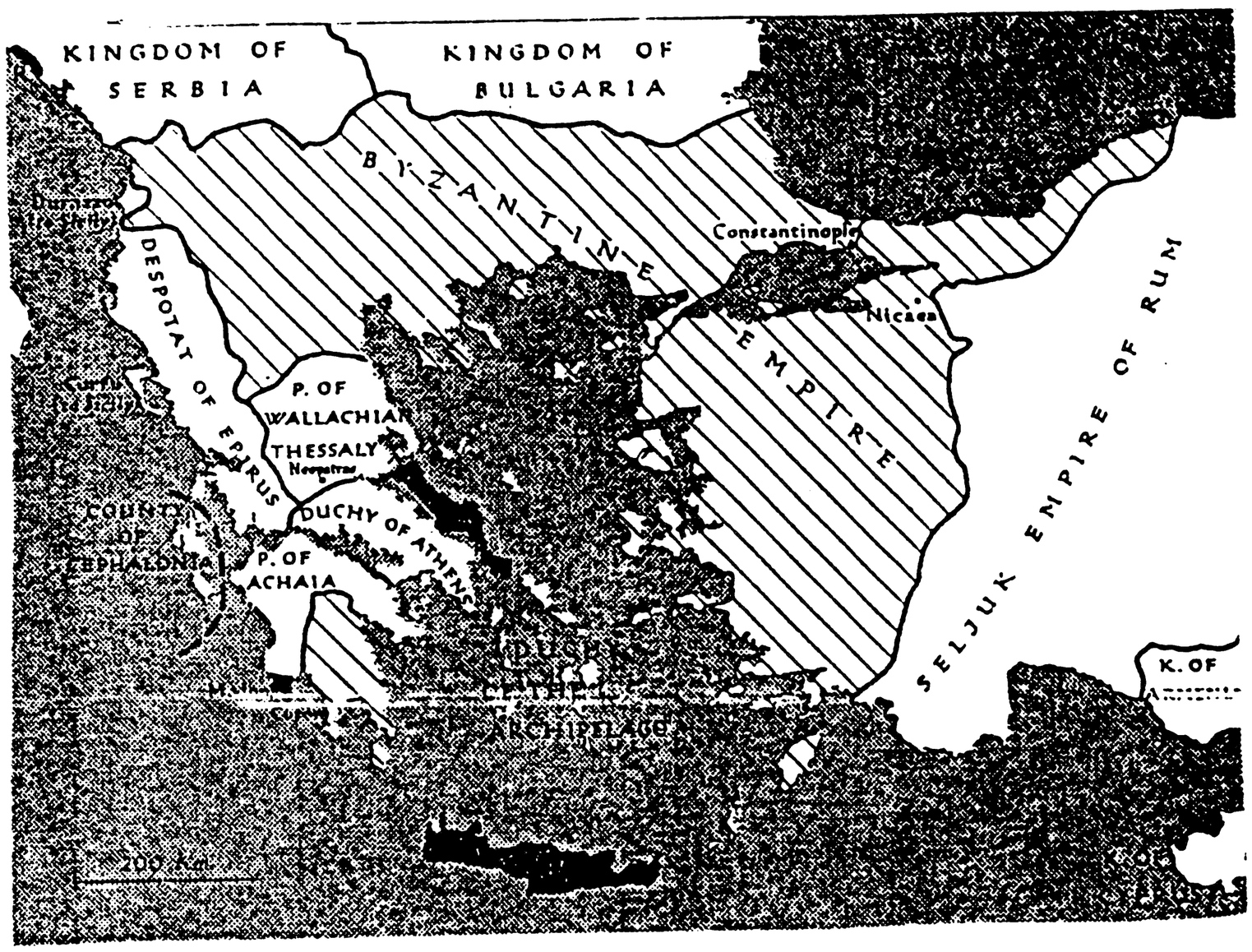

Figure A-2: Greece in 1265.*

*Permission granted for reprint of map taken from W.A. Heurtley, *A Short History of Greece*, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1965, p.55.

Appendix B
Table

Thirteenth Century Rulers

Byzantine Emperors

1195-1203	Alexius III Angelus
1203-4	Isaac II (recalled) and Alexius IV Angeli
1204	Alexius V Murtzuphlus
1204-23	Theodore I Lascaris
1222-54	John III Ducas Vatatzes
1254-58	Theodore II Lascaris
1258-61	John IV Lascaris
1259-82	Michael VIII Palaeologus

Latin Emperors

1204-5	Baldwin I
1206-16	Henry I
1217	Peter of Courtenay
1217-19	Yolande
1221-28	Robert of Courtenay
(1231-37)	John de Brienne
1228-61	Baldwin II

Latin Popes

1198-1216	Innocent III
1216-27	Honorius III
1227-41	Gregory IX
1241	Celestine IV
1243-54	Innocent IV
1254-61	Alexander IV
1261-64	Urban IV

Burgundian Lords of Athens

1205-25	Othon de la Roche
1225-63	Guy de la Roche
1263-80	John de la Roche

vita

Anna is a native of the area of Poughkeepsie, New York. She attended the local high school and graduated from Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York in 1954 with a Bachelor Degree in History. Later, in 1969, she completed educational courses from the State University of New York at New Paltz which gave her a teacher's certificate to teach History in the high schools of New York State. Later, Anna showed interest in the Greek language and took tutoring lessons for four years from a Greek teacher. At this time, Anna was motivated to pursue Byzantine Studies and registered for graduate courses at Lehigh University in the Fall of 1987. At the completion of the Master's Degree, Anna and her husband will be spending time in Athens, Greece for further studies in the Greek language and related areas.

Anna has a son who is pursuing his Master's degree in mathematics and a married daughter, who has two Master's degrees in Electrical Engineering and a son-in-law who is a Professor of Electrical engineering.